

# Business Focus

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF COMMERCE LEXINGTON INC. | JANUARY 2024 | VOLUME XXXII, ISSUE I

## Legislative Session Kicks Off in January

*Preview the key issues for regional advocacy efforts on page 6*



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Commerce Lexington on Jan. 25

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## Message from Board Chair Steve Byars

***"We're better together."***

Those words have been true throughout our history. They have gotten us through some challenging times here in Lexington. They are even more applicable today as our nine-county economic development area continues to collaborate on a regional economic strategy aimed at making Greater Lexington more competitive for jobs and talent.

Successful companies collaborate across county lines and other markets, and successful regions are doing the same thing to strengthen their position across the country and around the world. We've studied regional collaboration time and again as we travel to other places during our intercity Leadership Visits. Collaboration is an absolute must, because the stakes are high, and competition is fierce among the top regions nationwide.

For Commerce Lexington, the Regional Competitiveness Strategy is the single most important initiative our team is working on. The plan has big goals to increase jobs, wages, and our labor force – specifically young professionals – to at least the national average over the next four years. To achieve this, regional leaders agreed on seven specific action items focused on economic development, talent recruitment and retention, and public policy advocacy.

Collaboration among economic development professionals across our region has been going on for decades through the Bluegrass Alliance, which helps ease the expansion or relocation process for companies looking to grow here. The idea is that no matter where a project decides to locate, there are substantial direct and indirect economic impacts for all the communities in the region. The Regional Plan supercharges that collaboration to the next level with business, education, and government leaders all working toward common goals.

In 2024, Commerce Lexington will continue to be an advocate for your business as the 60-day Legislative Session of the Kentucky General Assembly convenes in January. We'll be working with our regional partners to advocate for things that will help advance the Regional Plan goals, other pro-business policies, and those that help our higher education institutions and specifically the University of Kentucky as our region's primary economic driver.

We must continue to stay engaged in the discussions about the Comprehensive Plan in Fayette County, land use policy in general, and the urban growth expansion plan. We've seen what happens without a proper plan for growth over several decades. It's led to rapidly rising housing costs, dangerously low housing inventory, and increased inequity across our community. We must utilize all growth strategies available, including infill and redevelopment and when necessary, adding land that can help businesses create more jobs, increase housing stock, and attract much needed talent.

One of the most valuable things Commerce Lexington does each year is lead a delegation to visit and study another city during its Leadership Visit. These community-building trips bring business and community leaders together to make positive changes in our community. This year, we'll travel to Salt Lake City, Utah (June 5-7) with a primary focus on learning about their ecosystem that helps commercialize intellectual property generated at the University of Utah.

I am very passionate about this organization, and I am excited to serve as your Board Chair for 2024. I encourage you to participate where you can and engage in issues that will help strengthen Greater Lexington for the next generation.



STEVE BYARS  
MONEYWATCH  
ADVISORS, INC.  
2024 BOARD CHAIR

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### **Personnel Updates:**

Submit your company's awards and milestones or personnel changes and additions to [mturner@commercelexington.com](mailto: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.

# HAPPY *new year!*

**Resolve to get involved  
and give back in 2024!**

This New Year, we are excited to embrace new opportunities and fresh traditions to ring in 2024. If you're looking for creative ways to give back, Blue Grass Community Foundation is here for you! Getting started is as easy as one, two, three!

## **1. Create a dollar-a-day giving goal.**

Commit to saving one dollar a day and donating \$365 to a cause you care about at the end of the year. Need help choosing where to donate? Join BGCF365 to learn more!



## **2. Choose a nonprofit to support as an organization.**

Designate a workday or a weekend each month to give back to your favorite charities. Set aside time to create care packages, volunteer for a community clean up, or pitch in to donate to a cause close to your organization's mission.



## **3. Donate blood to the Kentucky Blood Center.**

January is National Blood Donor Month, making it the perfect time to resolve to be a regular blood donor. Just one blood donation could save three lives! Find a donation site near you at [kybloodcenter.org](http://kybloodcenter.org).

Scan the QR code to search our directory of hundreds of Kentucky nonprofits, download our Giving Guide, or learn more about how Blue Grass Community Foundation can help you better organize and simplify your personal or business giving for 2024 through a donor advised giving fund!



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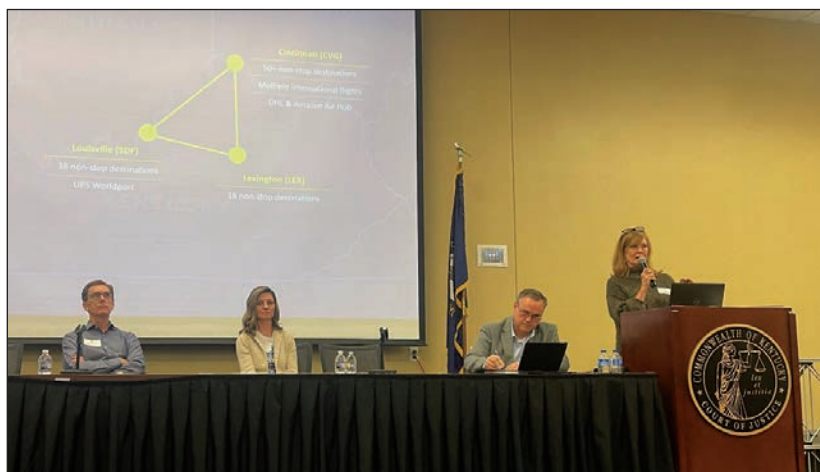


# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by Gina Greathouse, Niki Goldey, Cheryl Klever, Falon McFarland & Katie Vandegrift

## Growing the Greater Lexington Region's Life Sciences Industry

On December 6th, Commerce Lexington hosted a networking and strategy meeting with existing life science companies working in the area along with partners at the Lexington Mayor's Office, UK Innovate, and UK Coldstream Research Campus. Partners shared information about available resources designed to aid expansion efforts and grow existing companies. Commerce Lexington discussed the Comprehensive Regional Plan and details from the recent Targeted Industry Analysis which revealed favorable conditions for additional growth in life sciences including medical devices, ag bio, and biopharma. The group participated in a traditional SWOT industry analysis to help guide the growth strategy.



## Commerce Lex.'s Gina Greathouse Presents at Aviation Symposium

Gina Greathouse recently participated in a panel discussion at the Aviation Symposium hosted by Kentuckians for Better Transportation, the Kentucky Aviation Association, and the Kentucky Department of Aviation. The session, moderated by Blue Grass Airport's Mark Day, focused on the significant role of airport access in economic development, shedding light on the numerous opportunities it brings to our region. The panelists' expertise and insights contributed to a thought-provoking discussion, exploring how the aviation industry can drive economic growth and prosperity in Kentucky.

## Railroad 101 Informational Session

On November 17th, Commerce Lexington hosted a Railroad 101 session for the Bluegrass Alliance. A team of industry experts from R.J. Corman, Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation networked with the group and spent time discussing the most important things economic developers need to know when it comes to railroads and industrial projects. The event was well received and offered a platform to ask questions and learn more about this safe and efficient mode of transportation.

## E.D. Team Members Attend Economix Conference

Katie Vandegrift and Niki Goldey traveled to Atlanta November 28-30 to attend Economix. This fast-paced annual two-day conference brings together economic development professionals and top site selectors from across the country for valuable one-on-one time and deep dive conversations within specific industries. Additional presentations on workforce development, talent attraction and retention, and panel discussions that featured insights into current and future trends in site selection and how AI is affecting the practice rounded out day two. Throughout the conference, Katie and Niki made connections with 16 site selectors working in fields that have recently been identified as strategic industries well-suited for the Greater Lexington Region.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY THE NUMBERS:

For 2023 year-to-date, Commerce Lexington's Economic Development Division has responded to calls from:

**New Business: 56** prospects interested in finding a new location or expanding in the Lexington area.

**Client Visits to the Lexington Area: 27**

**Existing Business Visits: 102**

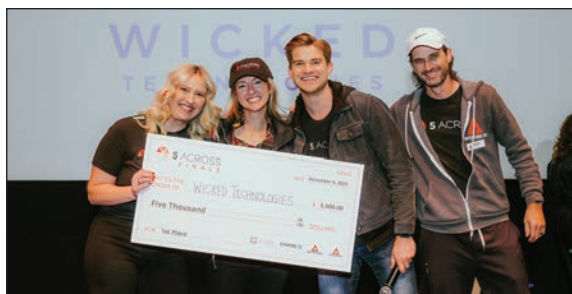
**Existing Business Attempts: 165**

**Total Active Projects: 37**



## 5 Across 2023 Champion

For more than 12 years, Awesome Inc. has put the spotlight on Kentucky entrepreneurs with the popular 5 Across Pitch Competition. Five times throughout the year, a total of twenty-five different companies compete against one another for a \$500 cash prize and a \$5,000 SAFE note from Keyhorse Capital. As each event produces one winner, those five companies earn a spot to pitch in the 5 Across Finals where they have a chance to win \$5,000 cash and a \$50,000 SAFE note from Keyhorse Capital. Feedcoyote Inc, TitleWise, Kyndly Benefits, Clean Space and Wicked Technologies pitched their companies on the stage at the Kentucky Theatre one final time on December 6th. Congratulations to the 2023 overall champions, Wicked Technologies!



## Bluegrass Alliance December Meeting

Brad Sowden, Executive Director at Winchester-Clark County Industrial Development Authority, hosted the Bluegrass Alliance for a year-end meeting on December 7th. Commerce Lexington shared funding updates and a recap of recent consultant visits along with proposed marketing events for 2024. All regional partners shared updates on the Kentucky Product Development Initiative in their counties as well as information on available sites and buildings.

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## State Legislators Return to Frankfort for 60-Day Regular Session

On January 2, state legislators return to Frankfort to kick-off the 60-day Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly. The top priority for the 60-day Regular Session is passage of the FY 24-26 state Executive Branch budget and state road funding plan for transportation infrastructure projects. Special taskforces have met over the interim related to certificate of need, jail and corrections system reforms, local government annexation, multi-modal freight transportation, and health and human services delivery systems. Legislation is anticipated from those working group meetings. Some of the issues Commerce Lexington and regional leaders will be advocating for this session to support the Regional Competitiveness Strategy include:

**State Tax Reform:** Commerce Lexington has been supportive of the General Assembly's efforts to modernize the state's tax code by creating a process to lower the individual income tax over time by expanding the sales tax base. These changes have helped move Kentucky from #36 in 2018 to #18 in 2023 in the Tax Foundation's business tax climate rankings. This session, we will continue to encourage lawmakers to monitor the impact of tax reform and avoid adding any new taxes on business inputs that negatively impact competitiveness for jobs in key sectors and make Kentucky an economic outlier with how surrounding states treat businesses.

**Local Government Tax Modernization:** Commerce Lexington supports an amendment to the Kentucky Constitution, and enabling legislation, that would modernize Kentucky's local government tax structure. Kentucky's Constitution restricts local government taxes to three areas and does not allow for other options reflective of a changing economy like local sales tax. Commerce Lexington supports allowing the General Assembly the ability to create a new framework that provides more diverse options for revenue generation, and provides local communities with the flexibility to decide the local tax structure that works best to meet their unique community needs.

**Kentucky Product Development Initiative:** In 2022, the Kentucky General Assembly invested \$100 million in the Kentucky Product Development Initiative (KPDI) to help accelerate the development of more land and buildings for jobs across the state. For our region, KPDI funding is supporting 9 job site projects and \$30M in local and state investment. One of the competitive disadvantages for the Greater Lexington region is the lack of shovel ready land for jobs, and the development of a 500-1000-acre mega site. Commerce Lexington and regional leaders will ask legislators to continue to invest in the KPDI program and consider flexibility in eligible projects to include regional economic development marketing.

**Talent Marketing Funding:** Our region is lagging the national average in labor force growth, specifically the number of young professionals living and working in the region. Through the Regional Competitiveness Strategy, regional leaders are working to attract and retain 1,500 more young professionals each year by elevating marketing to targeted cities and increasing job connections for students. Many states are making investments in talent attraction marketing efforts to amplify messaging

about quality of life and job opportunities. Commerce Lexington supports the General Assembly investing in funding for a talent attraction marketing grant program to help support regional economic development.

**Housing Affordability:** Rapidly rising home prices combined with low inventory in Fayette County and the region are pricing families, essential workers, and first-time homebuyers out of the market. Providing adequate levels of housing to meet the needs of the region's workforce is an issue of concern for expanding and relocating companies and the attraction of young professionals. At the state level, Commerce Lexington will support efforts to increase funding for housing affordability projects for Lexington and the region, including advocacy to the Kentucky Housing Corporation to ensure Lexington can more fairly compete for those resources based on the unique challenges of the community such as land availability. We also support the General Assembly allocating additional funding to support affordable housing projects aimed at meeting the missing middle or workforce housing needs.

**Transportation Funding:** Thriving communities must be able to move workers, provide services and transport products to market quickly and safely. Commerce Lexington supports a regional transportation approach, and continued state investments in critical road, rail, and air infrastructure projects within the nine-county region to improve interconnectivity and access. 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 funding infrastructure to better reflect the current state of transportation as well as anticipate future needs of our transportation systems.

**Education Funding:** Commerce Lexington supports the General Assembly's continued investments in public K-12 and higher education to support economic development and workforce development in the 9-county region. This includes investments in capital projects, performance-based funding model, work-ready scholarships, dual credit scholarships, and training programs.

The 2024 Regular Session is scheduled to conclude on April 15. Commerce Lexington urges members to stay connected on state, local and federal policy issues during the year. Regular email updates will be provided to members throughout the year to keep businesses updated on what's happening in City Hall, Frankfort and Washington, D.C. and the impact on the Greater Lexington region.

### CONTACT:

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](mailto:ajohnson@commercelexington.com).





## Greater Lexington Area Leaders Gather for Annual Regional Summit

Presented by Community Trust Bank, the 2023 Regional Summit was held on November 29, providing the opportunity for nearly 250 business, community, and local government leaders within our nine-county economic development region to

come together and learn about how we can make the Greater Lexington region more economically competitive for jobs and talent. For more about the regional plan, visit [commercelexington.com/regional-plan.html](https://commercelexington.com/regional-plan.html).



**1.** Billie Dollins (Community Trust Bank). **2.** Kenny McDonald (Columbus Partnership) highlighted the success of the One Columbus regional effort. **3.** A regional talent attraction panel included Emily Downey (Woodford Co. Chamber), Lori Cooper Saunders (Georgetown/Scott Co. Tourism Commission), Nancy Turner (Winchester/Clark Co. Tourism Commission), and Mary Quinn Ramer (VisitLEX). **4.** A panel during lunch highlighted the BlueOval SK project and included moderator Terri Bradshaw (KY Capital Development Corp.), Rick Games (Elizabethtown-Hardin Co. Industrial Foundation), Kristina Slattery (KY Cabinet for Economic Development), and Sarah Vaughn (BlueOval SK). **5.** Ted Abernathy (Economic Leadership) gave a benchmarking update. **6.** A session on strategic targets featured Gina Greathouse (Commerce Lexington) & Ted Abernathy. **7.** A policy priorities panel included Justin Landon (Bluegrass REALTORS), Tatum Dale (Congressman Andy Barr's office), J.D. Chaney (Kentucky League of Cities), Charles Aull (Kentucky Chamber), and Kim Menke (Toyota Motor North America). (Photos by Mahan Multimedia)

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## Legislators, Business Leaders Connect During Legislative Breakfast

The 2023 State Legislative Appreciation Breakfast was held on December 15 at Kentucky Eagle. The event included opportunities to network with state legislators and learn about priority state issues. Several legislators with the Central Kentucky Caucus attended the event with an emphasis on members that represent Fayette County. **Kentucky Senate President Robert Stivers, House Speaker David Osborne, and Senate Minority Caucus Chair Reggie Thomas** provided insight on the upcoming 2024 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly.



Commerce Lexington photo

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## EVENTS

### Registration Open Now for 2024 Leadership Visit to Salt Lake City

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Commerce Lexington is pleased to announce that the **2024 Leadership Visit presented by Central Bank & Trust Co.** will take us to Salt Lake City, Utah, **June 5 - 7, 2024**. Labeled as the Silicon Slopes, Salt Lake City is home to a buzzing tech scene - between that and the other booming businesses in the city, its downtown area has been brought to life like never before. From a top-shelf performing arts scene, to award-winning dining, craft beer, and distilling culture, this Old West town has become a forward-thinking, and burgeoning urban hub. There will be a lot for us to learn during this trip - from Salt Lake's thriving tech industry to its exceptional quality of life and efforts in the talent attraction space. It is also home to the Huntsman Cancer Institute, a nationally-recognized cancer hospital and research center and benchmark institute for the UK Markey Cancer Center.

This state capital city has a growing number of IT, finance, outdoor products, and manufacturing companies capitalizing on the area's strategic location as the "Crossroads of the West." Ranked as one of the best environments for business, the Salt Lake area's concentration of biomedical, high

tech, and software firms is among the highest in the nation.

Since 2019, the city has seen a hefty 12-percent increase in tech talent to nearly 67,500 tech jobs, outpacing the national average in tech job growth over that same period. Although there has been a rapid acceleration of the tech industry in recent years, software companies like Novell and WordPerfect got their start in Utah in the late 1970's.

The city is home to University of Utah, the state's flagship university with over 31,000 students, and one of the top 25 business and entrepreneurship schools according to the *Princeton Review*. The educated, multilingual, and ambitious workforce in Salt Lake City makes it an ideal location for top companies.

#### TO REGISTER:

Registration is available now on-line at **commercelexington.com** for the 2024 Leadership Visit. Full registration includes charter air travel, meals as outlined in the agenda, and two nights' accommodations at The Grand America Hotel (555 S. Main St., Salt Lake City, UT 84111).

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## Fifth Third Bank Presents An Evening With Commerce Lexington



Photo by Mahan Multimedia

Presented by **Fifth Third Bank**, **An Evening With Commerce Lexington** will take place on **Thursday, January 25**, from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Central Bank Center. Join us for a spectacular night of connection, celebration, and inspiration. This premier networking and community recognition gathering is your chance to celebrate a year of collaborative growth and business success, while igniting the path forward.

### What to expect:

- **Regional Celebration:** Unite with fellow members to celebrate the strength and resilience of our regional business community.
- **Leadership Recognition:** Be part of the excitement as we honor outstanding leaders who have played pivotal roles in our success.
- **Futuristic Prelude:** Let's collectively set the stage for the future, showcasing the innovative spirit that defines Commerce Lexington.

### TO REGISTER:

The cost to attend this Commerce Lexington members' only event is \$159 per person or \$1,590 for a table of ten. Register on-line at **commercelexington.com**.

### AN EVENING WITH COMMERCE LEXINGTON:

**WHEN:** Thursday, January 25, 2024

**TIME:** 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Central Bank Center

**REGISTER:** [commercelexington.com](http://commercelexington.com)

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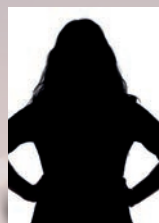
January 24

*Renee Shaw*  
Director of Public Affairs  
& Moderator at KET



February 15

*Melissa Brunet*  
Music Director of the  
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## EVENTS

### 2024 EMERGE Conference is Set for March 12th in Lexington Morning Keynote Dr. Bryan K. Williams to Bring High-Energy to Kickoff the Day

For the eleventh consecutive year, Commerce Lexington's EMERGE Conference will bring together emerging leaders across Central Kentucky for a full day of networking, engaging keynote speakers, informative breakout sessions, and discovering ways to better

connect to and impact the community. An outgrowth of one of Commerce Lexington's past Leadership Visits, the **2024 EMERGE Conference** will take place on **Tuesday, March 12**, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Central Bank Center in downtown Lexington.

#### MORNING KEYNOTE:

Our EMERGE morning keynote speaker is Dr. Bryan K. Williams, a speaker, consultant, and author, who is a noted authority on service excellence and leadership effectiveness. His high-energy, dynamic approach educates and inspires professionals to be consistently exceptional. Dr. Williams will have you motivated and ready for a full day of professional development and networking.



DR. BRYAN K. WILLIAMS

#### ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

Dr. Bryan Williams is an international speaker and author, who focuses on service excellence and leadership effectiveness. He has facilitated workshops and delivered keynotes worldwide for various companies in diverse industries. Bryan was the Global Corporate Director of Training and Organizational Effectiveness for the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. He holds degrees in Business Administration, Hotel/Restaurant Management, and Adult Education, including a Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership. Bryan is the founder of the BW Leadership Academy, the STRONG Leader Institute, the Manager Skills Workshop, and has authored six books. He was also a member of the Board of Examiners for the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

#### TO REGISTER:

The cost to attend 2024 EMERGE is \$225 per person for Commerce Lexington members, \$275 for non-members, and includes a full-day program, luncheon, keynote speakers, and reception. Registration is now available on-line at [emergelexington.com](https://emergelexington.com).

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## Emerging Leaders Gather for Networking at District 7 Social Hall

The Emerging Leaders of the Bluegrass program **presented by Keeneland** is a comprehensive initiative that helps emerging leaders expand their capacity to perform in leadership roles within Central Kentucky. Now is the time to get emerging leaders in your company or organization registered to participate in this year-round program focused on professional development, community education and networking.

In December, Emerging Leaders of the Bluegrass passholders participated in a night of networking, fun duckpin bowling, and drinks at District 7 Social Hall (**pictured at right**). This enabled attendees to expand their professional network, forge meaningful connections, and have a great time doing it.

### JOIN EMERGING LEADERS:

Purchase your annual pass today and begin expanding your capacity through professional development, networking and community education opportunities. The cost for a full year of professional development programming is



\$100 for Commerce Lexington members, \$125 for non-members, and \$50 for students. The annual pass year runs April through March. To learn more, visit [emergingleadersbg.com](http://emergingleadersbg.com).

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## Leadership Central Kentucky Class Visits Paris & Bourbon County

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By Matt Roberts, *United Way of the Bluegrass*

Our day began by visiting Pizza Wholesale of Lexington, a founding distributor of Hunt Brothers Pizza. Erin Hunt Furgeson, President/CEO, led an in-depth and engaging discussion explaining the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment. Erin then shared a brief history of Hunt Brothers Pizza.

Shortly after lunch, the class visited one of the most famous horse farms in the Thoroughbred industry, Claiborne Farm. We learned about the meticulous breeding and training process that goes into producing top quality racehorses and came away with an increased appreciation and understanding of the impact that the industry has in Central Kentucky.

The next stop was the Paris-Bourbon County YMCA, serving the community since 1913. Drew Beckett, Executive Director/CEO, shared a brief history and the different programs offered for all ages. We toured the Teen Center, which opened in 2022, and has provided a safe and fun space for teens in Bourbon County. While visiting the facility we had the opportunity to hear about the Waste Transfer Station Relocation Project. A panel of city and county leaders discussed the project and the challenges and opportunities to revitalize an area in the West End of Paris.

Mustard Seed Hill was our next destination on our tour, located in Millersburg. Victoria Benson, President of Mustard Seed Hill, shared the vision of Community Ventures and then a brief history and how the campus is home to Mustard Seed Events, Bourbon Christian Academy, and several small businesses. All of which has had a tremendous impact on the Millersburg community.

The final stop of the day was the newly constructed Secretariat Park in downtown Paris. The park was a passion project for a small group of residents that understood the importance of celebrating the most famous Thoroughbred in history and his connection to Bourbon County.

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## Leadership Lexington Learns About Local Health & Human Services



During the afternoon of Health & Human Services Day, class members broke up into groups to visit various local nonprofits. **ABOVE LEFT:** A group visited the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Another Leadership Lexington group visited the Family Care Center. (Photos submitted)

### Commerce Lexington Staff Report

Leadership Lexington's Health and Human Services Day was a comprehensive exploration of the critical issues and initiatives shaping the health and well-being of the Lexington community. The day kicked off with a light breakfast at UK HealthCare, setting the stage for a day filled with insights and discussions.

The morning sessions began with sponsor remarks by Todd Wetzel of McGregor & Associates in UK HealthCare's Karpf Auditorium. The class delved into Lexington's social services, featuring Commissioner Kacy Allen Bryant and Stephanie Theakston from the It's Time Campaign. A panel of healthcare leaders, including Roberto Cardarelli (DO, MHA, MPH, FAAFP, Saint Joseph Hospital and Saint Joseph East), Chris Roty (MHA, FACHE, Baptist Health Lexington), and Colleen Swartz (DNP, MSN, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FNAP, UK HealthCare), helped the class foster a deeper understanding of healthcare

dynamics.

The day also included a behind-the-scenes tour of UK Healthcare. Then, the focus shifted to addiction and recovery with Dr. Alex Elswick, Mark Mahan, and Jonathan Allen shedding light on the challenges and triumphs in this critical area. Lunch followed, featuring remarks from presenting sponsor Joe Kenney of Community Trust Bank.

The afternoon was dedicated to non-profit visits, with participants dividing into groups to explore organizations like AVOL Kentucky, Inc., Habitat for Humanity, and many more local nonprofits. The class debriefed at KSBar & Grille, where groups reported out from their visits and shared project reports.

The festivities continued with an Ugly Sweater Party hosted by the Leadership Lexington Alumni Association, providing a lighthearted and social conclusion to a day filled with education and engagement.

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Blue Grass Community Foundation

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### HISTORY SPONSOR:

Lexington History Museum

## 2024 Ambassador Committee Announced; Cheryl Eadens Recognized

Commerce Lexington announced the members of its 2024 Ambassador Committee, a selective group of volunteers who serve as an extension of the Commerce Lexington staff, ensuring that member businesses are getting the most out of their membership. Ambassadors help educate members on benefits, programs, and events, as well as represent Commerce Lexington at ribbon cuttings, grand openings, networking functions, and open houses.

At the Ambassador Appreciation Reception in December, **Cheryl Eadens** (Bluegrass Office Systems) was recognized with the Ambassador of the Year Award for 2023. The award criteria includes overall participation, as well as effectiveness and contributions to the committee.



CHERYL EADENS

### 2024 AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

**Francisco Castro**, JCC Insurance Group, LLC

**Nicole Corbin**, David H. Elliot Company, Inc.

**April Corwin**, Forcht Bank

**Alicia Cox**, Stock Yards Bank

**Ginger Davis**, Churchill McGee

**Brandy Drakeford**, Xooker

**Vicki Evans**, TOPS Marketing

**Caroline Francis**, University of Kentucky

Alumni Career Services

**Jamie Hall**, Don Franklin Auto Mall **(CHAIR)**

**Laura Justice**, VisitLEX

**Trey McCallie**, Realty One Group Bluegrass

**Laura Mobley-Corn**, Express Employment Professionals

**Jeff Morrett**, Parsons & Howard Insurance Group

**Crystal Newton**, 46Solutions

**Dan Noel**, Men In Kilts Lexington

**Susie Patrick**, WLEX-TV

**Jessica Pfister**, Heartland Payroll & Payments

**Berry Popp**, Whitaker Bank

**Alisa Rose**, Nimlok-Kentucky

**Adam Routt**, Quality Inn Lexington

**Mike Sybolt**, LW Office Furniture Warehouse

**Becky Trimble**, Central Bank Center

**Kelly Webb**, Houchens Insurance Group

**Mark Weimer**, WesBanco Bank



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Commerce Lexington Inc. Members From November 16 to December 18, 2023

## NEW GOLD PREMIER PARTNER

### Equity Solutions Group

*Business Consultants*  
Main Contact: Ray Daniels  
1591 Winchester Rd., Ste. 125  
Lexington, KY 40505  
Phone: (803) 760-2711  
<https://esgconsultingllc.com>

## NEW SILVER PREMIER PARTNER

### E A Partners, PLC

*Engineers - Consulting*  
Main Contact: Les Haney  
3111 Wall Street  
Lexington, KY 40513  
Phone: (859) 296-9889  
[www.eapartners.com](http://www.eapartners.com)

## NEW BRONZE PREMIER PARTNERS

### Biscuit Belly - Fountains at Palomar

*Opening Spring 2024*  
*Restaurants*  
Contact: Madison Shoffner  
4235 Harrodsburg Road  
Phone: (859) 303-4654  
[www.biscuitbelly.com](http://www.biscuitbelly.com)

### Biscuit Belly - Masterson Station

*Restaurants*  
112 Lucille Dr., Lexington, 40511  
Phone: (859) 303-4654  
[www.biscuitbelly.com](http://www.biscuitbelly.com)

### Biscuit Belly: East Main

*Restaurants*  
652 E. Main Street  
Lexington, KY 40508  
Phone: (606) 248-8352  
[www.biscuitbelly.com](http://www.biscuitbelly.com)

### Advanced Dermatology

*Health Provider*  
Main Contact: Karen Begley  
715 Shaker Drive, Suite 132  
Lexington, KY 40504  
Phone: (859) 288-5004

### Advanced Lodging Solutions, LLC

*Hotels/Motels*  
Main Contact: Nathan Dodge  
1987 N. Broadway, Lexington, 40505  
Phone: (859) 299-1202

### Bluegrass Anesthesia Services, PSC

*Physicians & Surgeons, Anesthesiology*  
Main Contact: Sharon Howard  
425 Lewis Hargett Circle  
Lexington, KY 40503  
Phone: (859) 268-1030

### Bunch and Brock PSC

*Attorneys*  
Main Contact: Matt Bunch  
126 W. Maxwell Street, Suite 200  
Lexington, KY 40508  
Phone: (859) 254-5522  
[www.bunchlaw.com](http://www.bunchlaw.com)

### Central Kentucky Anesthesia, PSC

*Physicians & Surgeons, Anesthesiology*  
Main Contact: Sharon Howard  
425 Lewis Hargett, Lexington, 40503  
Phone: (859) 268-1030

### Central KY Lodging Inc.

*Real Estate Rental Services*  
Main Contact: Brian Dodge  
2331 Fortune Drive, Suite 250  
Lexington, KY 40509  
Phone: (859) 608-9266

### Cheryl B. Mitchell

*Speakers-Professional*  
Main Contact: Cheryl Mitchell  
713 Hollyhock Dr., Lexington, KY 40511  
Phone: (217) 369-0637  
[www.cherylbmitchell.com](http://www.cherylbmitchell.com)

### Clean Media, LLC

*Advertising-Other*  
Main Contact: Joe Sweeney  
333 West Vine St., Suite 1610  
Lexington, KY 40507  
Phone: (859) 429-7075  
[www.cleanmedia.net](http://www.cleanmedia.net)

### Daddio's Pizza

*Restaurants*  
Main Contact: Wess Mills  
333 South Limestone  
Lexington, KY 40508  
Phone: (859) 303-5553  
[www.daddiospizzalex.com](http://www.daddiospizzalex.com)

### Dad's Favorite Deli

*Restaurants*  
Main Contact: James Caudill  
820 Lane Allen Road  
Lexington, KY 40504  
Phone: (859) 309-1930  
[www.dadsfavorites.com](http://www.dadsfavorites.com)

### Diversified Demolition

*Construction*  
Main Contact: John Conley  
773 B Westland Drive  
Lexington, KY 40504

Phone: (859) 225-1144  
[www.diversifieddemolition.com](http://www.diversifieddemolition.com)

### Empire Sports Paintball

*Entertainment*  
Main Contact: Alan Ramos  
1052 Eagle Creek Lake Drive  
Lawrenceburg, KY 40342  
Phone: (502) 219-2889  
[www.empiresportspaintball.com](http://www.empiresportspaintball.com)

### Finding Freedom Through Friendship

*Non-Profit Organizations*  
Main Contact: Jody Greenlee  
1781 Eastwood Drive  
Lexington, KY 40502  
Phone: (859) 608-7747  
[www.finding-freedom-through-friendship.org](http://www.finding-freedom-through-friendship.org)

### Gatsby Glass of Lexington

*Glass*  
Main Contact: Jasmine Howard  
2175 Christian Road, Ste. 170  
Lexington, KY 40509  
Phone: (859) 221-4609  
[www.gatsbyglass.com](http://www.gatsbyglass.com)

### Golden Flame Hot Wings

*Restaurants*  
Main Contact: Steve Magnani  
141 Rojay Dr., Lexington, KY 40503  
Phone: (859) 785-0268  
<https://gfhwings.com/lexington>

### Kentucky Gym

*Fitness Centers*  
Main Contact: Bryan McNee  
2598 Richmond Road  
Lexington, KY 40509  
Phone: (859) 303-4239  
[www.kentuckygym.com](http://www.kentuckygym.com)

### Kirk Horse Insurance LLC

*Equine Insurance*  
Main Contact: Barry Snelling  
129 Walton Ave., Lexington, 40508  
Phone: (859) 231-0838  
[www.kirhorse.com](http://www.kirhorse.com)

### Lonesome Day Records

*Recording Studio*  
Main Contact: Randall Deaton  
387 Hill Ct., Lexington, KY 40503  
Phone: (606) 620-4322  
[www.lonesomeday.com](http://www.lonesomeday.com)

### Lucia's World Emporium

*Gift Shops*  
Main Contact: Teresa Hendrix  
328 N. Ashland Ave.  
Lexington, KY 40502  
Phone: (859) 523-1529  
[www.luciasworldemporium.com](http://www.luciasworldemporium.com)

### Lush Aesthetics

*Skin Care*  
Main Contact: Sean Hogan  
135 North Broadway Street  
Georgetown, KY 40324  
Phone: (859) 629-0987  
[www.lushaestheticsky.com](http://www.lushaestheticsky.com)

### Marafiki Center

*Non-Profit Organizations*  
Main Contact: Elisha Mutayongwa  
857 Sparta Court, Suite A  
Lexington, KY 40504  
Phone: (859) 420-7681  
[www.marafikicenter.org](http://www.marafikicenter.org)

### Marlow Energy, LLC

*Coal Miners & Shippers*  
Main Contact: Grant Talbert  
425 Bay Hill Circle  
Richmond, KY 40475  
Phone: (859) 559-7245

### Ohio Valley Pain Institute PLLC

*Physicians*  
Main Contact: Sharon Howard  
425 Lewis Hargett Circle  
Lexington, KY 40503  
Phone: (859) 268-1030

### ParaTechs Corp.

*Biomedical Technology*  
Main Contact: Angelika Fath-Goodin  
1122 Oak Hill Dr., Lexington, KY 40505  
Phone: (859) 317-9213  
[www.paratechs.com](http://www.paratechs.com)

### Project Ricochet (Stronger Together Kentucky)

*Non-Profit Organizations*  
Contact: Abeni El-Amin, Ph.D., Ed.D.  
161 N. Mill St., Lexington, KY 40507  
Phone: (919) 827-3118  
[www.projectricochet.org](http://www.projectricochet.org)

### Thrive Therapies, PLLC

*Physical Therapists*  
Main Contact: Leah Anderson  
2355 Huguenard Drive, Suite 201a  
Lexington, KY 40503  
Phone: (859) 381-7620  
[www.thrivetherapyky.com](http://www.thrivetherapyky.com)

### Woodstock Animal Foundation

*Animal Health*  
Main Contact: Kristyn Williams  
843 Lane Allen Rd.  
Lexington, KY 40504  
Phone: (859) 277-7729  
[www.woodstockanimalfoundation.org](http://www.woodstockanimalfoundation.org)



# PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Corporate Moves, Company Awards and Notable Milestones



**Alltech** was recently awarded a silver medal from EcoVadis — putting it in the top 25-percent of sustainable companies globally. The silver medal recognizes Alltech's purpose of Working Together for a Planet of Plenty and its commitment to prioritizing the efficient production of nutritious food while minimizing environmental impact, implementing environmentally and economically sustainable solutions, promoting fair labor practices and fostering ethical business conduct. Alltech also earned the platinum medal for its production site in Springfield, Kentucky, which puts it in the top one-percent of the businesses assessed by EcoVadis. Alltech Coppens, which produces industrial feeds for the aquaculture sector, earned gold-medal status, putting it in the top 7-percent of sustainable companies globally.

**Greg J. Feeney, Ph.D.**, has been named as president and CEO of **Bluegrass Community and Technical College**. A 25-year employee of BCTC and its former provost, Feeney has served as the college's interim president since July.

**Central Bank & Trust Co.** announced several promotions and additions. Promotions included **Joshua Bly** to assistant vice president, image processing manager, **Allison Carter** to vice president, cash management officer I, **Jenny Foley** to vice president, personal trust officer II, **Danny C. Noland** to senior vice president, auditing manager, **Ben Pelfrey** to retail banking officer I, **Matthew Ratliff** to senior vice president, retail sales executive, **Ashley Rodgers** to vice president, cash management officer I, and **Diana Webb** to assistant vice president, deposit services manager. Recent additions included **Kerry Bickett** as retail banking officer II, **Brad Noel** as vice president, commercial lending officer IV, **Tim Sprague** as vice president, cash management officer II, and **Ben L. Little** as retail banking officer II.

**Community Trust Bancorp, Inc.** announced the appointment of **Dr. Lillian (Kay) Webb** to its board of directors. She is currently the director of the Center for Career, Vocation, and Leadership at the University of Pikeville.

**Dickinson Wright** recently received a score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2023-2024 Corporate Equality Index, the nation's foremost benchmarking survey and report measuring corporate policies and practices related to LGBTQ+ workplace equality. Dickinson Wright joins the ranks of 545 major U.S. businesses that also earned top marks this year. The results of the 2023-2024 CEI showcase how U.S.-based companies are promoting LGBTQ+ friendly workplace policies in the U.S. and abroad.

**Equestrian Events, Inc.**: **Erin Woodall** has assumed the role of executive director.

**Gess Mattingly & Atchison, P.S.C.** announced that **Sonam A. Hira** and **Mary M. Baxter** have joined the firm as associates and that **Susan C. Sears** has joined the firm as Of Counsel.

**GRW** announced the appointment of **Chris Hammer** as its new president and chief operating officer.

**Holly Hill & Co.'s Chef Ouita Michel** was recently honored by Women Leading Kentucky with the Martha Layne Collins Award (lifetime achievement award) and an Honorary Membership in the University of Kentucky's Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Kentucky Extension Association of Family Consumer Services (KEAFCS), which is granted to select individuals who are distinguished, knowledgeable, and supportive of KEAFCS.

**Independence Bank** was recently named to the nation's 2023 Best Banks to Work For. This is the 15th consecutive year a top accolade has been earned by American Banker. The list includes 90 institutions across the country. Independence Bank is in the top three Kentucky-based banks by securing the 51st spot overall and 13th by asset size of institutions in the \$3-10 billion range.

The **Kentucky Distillers' Association** announced that **Jessica Pendergrass** of Heaven Hill Distilleries has been elected as chair of the organization. The Board also named **Ken Lewis** (New Riff Distilling) as vice chair, **Gigi DaDan** (Louisville Distilling Co.) as secretary, and **Ryan Ashley** (Four Roses) as treasurer. Other Board officers include **Chris Morris** (Brown-Forman) as immediate past chairman, **Ray Franklin** (Garrard County Distilling Co.) representing "Proof" level members, and **Lynne Dant** (Log Still Distillery) representing "Craft" level members.

**Link-Belt Excavators** was awarded the AEM Advocacy BRONZE Award for participating in the Association of Equipment Manufacturers advocacy program (*I Make America*). This recognition acknowledges Link-Belt's commitment to advancing the equipment manufacturing industry's priorities through grassroots efforts and other advocacy activities. The AEM Advocacy Program recognizes member companies actively supporting and engaging in the association's initiatives.

**McBrayer PLLC** Member **Mitchel Denham** recently served as co-chair of the gubernatorial inauguration of Gov. Andy Beshear and First Lady Britany Beshear. He joined the inauguration festivities alongside **MML&K Government Solutions** principal **Sara Osborne**, who served on the inauguration committee.

**Schrader Commercial Properties** announced that **Jamie Schrader** was named the 2023 Central Kentucky Broker of the Year by the Kentucky Commercial Real Estate Association.

**Stites & Harbison, PLLC** has been ranked in the 2024 edition of *Best Law Firms®*. The firm's National Tier 1 rankings include: Litigation – Construction, Litigation – Real Estate, and Trademark Law. The firm's overall results include 88 metropolitan rankings in six regions and represent the following 48 legal practice areas. Law firms were evaluated and ranked through a combination of hard data, peer reviews and client assessments.

**Stites & Harbison, PLLC** recently welcomed back attorney **Ken Gish** to the firm's Lexington office. He has rejoined the firm as a Member (Partner) in the Environmental, Natural Resources and Energy Service Group and the Business & Finance Service Group. In addition, Four more attorneys joined the Lexington office, including **Harlee Havens**, **Brandon Lira**, **John Paul Stilz**, and **Conner Wehrle**.

**Sturgill, Turner, Barker & Moloney, PLLC** promoted litigator **Katie E. Bouvier** to Member of the firm and recently welcomed member attorney **Carmine G. Iaccarino**, along with attorneys **Megan L. Adkins**, **Andy M. Yocum**, **Andrew D. Moore**, and **James T. McSweeney**.

The **University of Kentucky** was recently recognized on the inaugural list of Best Colleges for Future Leaders by *Time* magazine and Statista. The list was determined by analyzing approximately 2,000 of the most influential leaders in the U.S., coming from business, government, academia and culture. What distinguishes these schools, experts say, is not necessarily that they teach students to be better leaders, but that alums receive more opportunities, and many companies have a vested interest in hiring them, noted *Time*.

**WTVQ/ABC36** announced the appointment of **Chris Mossman** as its new general manager, succeeding a retiring Chris Aldridge. Mossman returns to the Bluegrass, having previously served as general manager of WKYT.

## SUBMIT PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Submit company awards, personnel changes, additions, or promotions to [mturner@commercelexington.com](mailto:mturner@commercelexington.com). Information is published in the order received and as space permits.



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## COMMERCE LEXINGTON CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JANUARY 2024:

- 11** **Leadership Lexington presented by Community Trust Bank:** Government Day Session.
- 15** Commerce Lexington offices closed in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- 17** **Leadership Central Kentucky program presented by Kentucky Utilities** at Fayette County.
- 25** **An Evening With Commerce Lexington presented by Fifth Third Bank,** 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Central Bank Center.  
- SEE PAGE 9

### FEBRUARY 2024:

- 5** **Money Smart for Small Business** classes resume each Monday through March 11, beginning at 5:30 p.m. RSVP to [fmcfarland@commercelexington.com](mailto:fmcfarland@commercelexington.com).
- 8** **Leadership Lexington presented by Community Trust Bank:** Education Day Session.
- 13** Member Mixer, 10:00 - 11:15 a.m., via Zoom.
- 21** **Leadership Central Kentucky program presented by Kentucky Utilities** at Scott County.

### MARCH 2024:

- 12** **EMERGE Conference,** 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at Central Bank Center in downtown Lexington. - SEE PAGE 10
- 14** **Leadership Lexington presented by Community Trust Bank:** Arts Day Session.
- 20** **Leadership Central Kentucky program presented by Kentucky Utilities** at Woodford County.
- 21** **Spring Opportunity Exchange,** 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., at the Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center (300 E. 3rd Street).

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