



OKC Trip Photo by Bill Straus Photography



## **LEADERSHIP VISIT MISSION STATEMENT**

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*Discovery and collaboration are the focus of Commerce Lexington Inc. Leadership Visits. Our charge is to capitalize on the opportunity to unite energized Central Kentucky leaders, both elected and volunteer, and inspire bold and systemic improvements to our city and region.*



# LEADERSHIP VISIT HISTORY

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Thought to be the longest-running and largest inter-city visit of its kind among chambers and economic development groups, Commerce Lexington Inc.'s annual Leadership Visit is a cauldron of big ideas, strategies, and partnerships. The Leadership Visit is designed as a learning opportunity for community leaders to study other cities and to apply the best of what they see and hear to the Bluegrass Region. The group also examines challenges in the Bluegrass, what is working well at home, and ways to improve. Over the years, Bluegrass leaders have visited such cities as Baltimore, MD, Greenville, SC, Jacksonville, FL, Madison, WI, Minneapolis, MN, Mobile, AL, Portland, OR, Raleigh, NC, and Providence, RI. Bluegrass businesspeople last visited San Antonio in 1983.

## PAST LEADERSHIP VISITS SINCE 1974

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2012 . . . . .	San Antonio, TX	1992 . . . . .	Austin, TX
2011 . . . . .	Greenville, SC	1991 . . . . .	Annapolis, MD/Washington, DC
2010 . . . . .	Pittsburgh, PA	1990 . . . . .	Boca Raton, FL
2009 . . . . .	Madison, WI	1989 . . . . .	Tucson, AZ
2008 . . . . .	Austin, TX	1988 . . . . .	New Orleans, LA
2007 . . . . .	Boulder, CO	1987 . . . . .	Charleston, SC
2006 . . . . .	Oklahoma City, OK	1986 . . . . .	Nashville, TN
2005 . . . . .	Providence, RI	1985 . . . . .	Tulsa, OK
2004 . . . . .	Charleston, SC	1984 . . . . .	Chapel Hill, NC
2003 . . . . .	Baltimore, MD/Washington, DC	1983 . . . . .	San Antonio, TX
2002 . . . . .	Raleigh, NC	1982 . . . . .	Minneapolis, MN
2001 . . . . .	Ann Arbor, MI	1981 . . . . .	Scottsdale, AZ
2000 . . . . .	Nashville, TN	1980 . . . . .	Orlando, FL
1999 . . . . .	Portland, OR	1979 . . . . .	Savannah, GA
1998 . . . . .	Mobile, AL	1978 . . . . .	Jacksonville, FL
1997 . . . . .	Madison, WI	1977 . . . . .	Tampa, FL
1996 . . . . .	Richmond, VA	1976 . . . . .	Houston, TX
1995 . . . . .	Greenville, SC	1975 . . . . .	Washington, DC
1994 . . . . .	Tampa, FL	1974 . . . . .	Charleston, SC
1993 . . . . .	Charlotte, NC		



# LEADERSHIP VISIT KEY IMPACTS

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## MERGED GOVERNMENT:

Our system of merged government was a focus of discussion during two trips to **Jacksonville, Florida** (1971, 1978). Lexington's city and county governments became merged in 1974 and was the first Urban-County Government in the state of Kentucky. Today, the cities of Evansville, Indiana, and even Pittsburgh are looking to consolidate governments modeled after Lexington and Louisville.

## FCPS FACILITIES TAX:

The facilities tax that has enabled Fayette County Public Schools to do nearly **\$300 million** in school renovations and new school construction gained momentum and support following the visit to Oklahoma City (2006). After seeing what OKC officials were able to accomplish with their local option sales tax, Lexington officials knew they would need to take a different approach to enhance our school system with Kentucky cities unable to institute a local option sales tax. The increase in the property tax rate ultimately passed in 2007.

## THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE:

Lexington's wildly popular Thursday Night Live events run by the Downtown Lexington Corp. in the summer months was an idea replicated from the trip to **Greenville, South Carolina**, in 1995. Events and festivals like Thursday Night Live add to our great quality of life and help to attract newcomers and visitors to the area.

## FAYETTE EDUCATION FOUNDATION:

The Fayette Education Foundation was created following the visit to **Raleigh, North Carolina** (2002) as a private, non-profit corporation to work in partnership with Fayette County Public Schools to help close achievement gaps and to raise student achievement at all levels. The "It's About Kids," "Ride for Kids" and "Back to School" campaigns resulted in more than \$300,000 in donations and pledges, and **more than \$190,000 in grants** were distributed to schools by May 2007.

## MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:

Local initiatives and support for minority and women-owned businesses have improved mightily in Lexington starting with the visit to **Greenville, South Carolina**, in 1995, with the creation of Commerce Lexington's

Minority Business Development program, to the Access Loan Program after the Nashville trip (2000), to improvements in area **procurement initiatives** following the visit to Baltimore (2003). Known linkages of procurement efforts for minority businesses have resulted in approximately **\$10,278,000** since November 2005 from a variety of private businesses and construction companies, LFUCG, Blue Grass Airport, LexTran, the University of Kentucky, and the state of Kentucky.

## ACCESS LOAN PROGRAM:

More than **\$10 million** in loans has been approved for the start or expansion of small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses in the Greater Lexington area. This innovative program was created after the visit to **Nashville, Tennessee** (2000), and has now been replicated in several other surrounding counties with the assistance of Commerce Lexington Inc.

## LFUCG HERBIE & ROSIE PROGRAM:

The garbage collection and recycling programs in Lexington that people know today - using the Herbies and Rosies - were developed following the visit to **Scottsdale, Arizona** (1981). In 2010, the city of Lexington expanded its recycling program with an upgrade to its Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), making recycling easier for residents and more efficient for the city.

## COMMITMENT TO TRAIL SYSTEM:

Upon seeing cities like **Oklahoma City, Boulder, Austin**, and **Madison** recently, participants have seen the impact that a quality bike/walking trail system can have on the health of a community and as a recruitment tool for new companies/employees. Lexington features more than 50 miles of trails, from shared use trails to walking trails and paths to hiking trails.

## OTHER RESULTS OF NOTE:

New Century Lexington's Community Livability Report, Coldstream Research Park, Lexington's downtown pedway system, the World Trade Center, Hope Center, and the economic development entity Lexington United were all studied during or created after Leadership Visits.