

# BUSINESS FOCUS



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF COMMERCE LEXINGTON INC. | JULY 2020 | VOLUME XXVIII, ISSUE VII

## 2020 Salute to Small Business Awards Application Available On-line Now

*Deadline is August 3rd*



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[www.CommerceLexington.com](http://www.CommerceLexington.com)



## Message from the Board Chair: Diversity & Inclusion are Important to Our Economy

It's safe to say that our nation is at a crossroads when it comes to ongoing racial injustices and inequality. Many businesses and organizations, including Commerce Lexington Inc. (see below), have publicly said 'enough is enough. We must do better and make positive changes, so that no individual feels unsafe, targeted or less than ever again.'

I am encouraged by the many statements and words of support across the country for the African-American community, but actions always speak louder than words. Many leaders, business owners and families are having conversations about racial injustice, re-emphasizing their core values to their employees, listening to different perspectives, and evaluating their processes to ensure they are fostering a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment.

There are many studies that show the positive impact of diversity and inclusion inside a business and ultimately the economy as a whole. The more we respect, listen to, and understand different cultures and perspectives, while providing equal opportunities for growth, the more effective your workforce and more prosperous your company will become.

Commerce Lexington Inc. has long held that diversity and creating a welcoming city for ALL is not only good for our economy, but is also key to our business recruitment and retention efforts. Over the years, we have worked with community partners to strengthen relationships by bringing different faiths and segments of our community together through the Courageous Conversations movement.

Our award-winning Minority Business Development Program was created many years ago in response to local research indicating that Lexington had some glaring deficiencies and opportu-



**RAY DANIELS**  
PRESIDENT  
EQUITY SOLUTIONS  
GROUP  
2020 CLX BOARD  
CHAIR

nities when it came to promoting and nurturing diversity in business, access to resources for disadvantaged business owners, and helping companies better connect with minority- and women-owned vendors.

Since 2001, the Access Loan Program has helped facilitate financing of more than \$23 million for small and minority-owned businesses, with \$5 million of that figure coming in the last two years.

CLX developed a Minority Business Resource Guide in 2003, which not only contains services available to minority-owned businesses, but also includes a list of minority-owned member businesses to help larger majority companies and organizations locate and purchase services from minority-owned small businesses.

Another program that has been nationally-recognized is the CLX Minority Business Accelerator, which was created to accelerate the development of sizable minority business enterprises (MBEs) and to strengthen and expand the regional minority entrepreneurial community. We have just recently added a fifth participant to the Accelerator, which has resulted in more than \$13 million in procurement for those companies since 2013.

We have done a lot over the years to assist minority-owned businesses. However, we must do more and continue to seek new and innovative ways to reach out to, promote, and positively impact more ethnically-owned companies. CLX board and staff leadership recently met with representatives of The People's Campaign, a group of area Black faith leaders, to discuss opportunities where Lexington can address its ongoing racial inequality. We look forward to collaborating with other community partners to move the needle on this important issue.



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Ray Daniels, *President*  
Equity Solutions Group

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## Display Rates

For DISPLAY RATES in Business Focus, contact Kelly Bates at (859) 226-1612 or kbates@CommerceLexington.com, and an account executive will contact you.

## 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.

## Commerce Lexington Inc. Statement Regarding Ongoing Racial Injustice:

"In economic success, it's often said that a rising tide lifts all boats within a community. However, for far too long across our country, that 'tide' has not been equal for all segments of our population. Longstanding racism, intolerance and injustice continue to pervade our society, causing harm to people of color – their families, businesses and communities. It is unacceptable, and Commerce Lexington Inc. stands with those seeking to be heard through peaceful protests and wholeheartedly supports collaborative efforts to create change across our community, the Commonwealth, and the nation."



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A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF THE BLUEGRASS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (BBDP)



SUBMITTED BY CLX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION: GINA GREATHOUSE, CHERYL KLEVER & KATIE VANDEGRIFT

## What the Future of Economic Development Looks Like in the Era of COVID-19

The economic development team kickstarted 2020 with numerous visits from prospects and site selection consultants interested in Lexington and the region. In March, the COVID – 19 pandemic abruptly halted all momentum. Our team's focus immediately shifted to help existing businesses in the region locate resources to sustain through the economic downfall and provide support to the City of Lexington in efforts to find available personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline workers.

Moving forward, most traditional in-person meetings and site visits will occur through virtual technology. Our team is prepared to utilize technology platforms as they become increasingly more important to accommodate economic development professionals. Business relationships may take longer to develop; however, they will remain critical, and we still expect in-person meetings as appropriate. Many companies project a decline in revenue this year, therefore, economic incentives will remain an important factor for those making decisions on business relocation and expansion.

Commerce Lexington Inc. is committed to locate valuable resources for existing companies and remain (virtually) connected with site selection consultants, while being respectful of the current situation. We remain optimistic to reunite with our prospect clients as the economy reopens. We remain hopeful that the pipeline of new projects will steadily increase in late summer.

Many of our industry association experts anticipate expanded production of items that are key to our national security, such as medi-



cines, pharmaceuticals, auto parts, aerospace, defense and others. This will impact the commercial real estate market, so communities will need to be prepared with appropriately zoned land and available buildings. As the U.S. economy continues to restart, greater access to capital, job training, and infrastructure will be necessary.

## STAT OF THE MONTH: Access Loan Program Has Facilitated Over \$23 Million in Financing for Small & Minority-Owned Businesses Over the Last 19 Years

Small businesses account for over 99-percent of businesses in the United States, but a majority report difficulty in obtaining small business loans by their bank<sup>1</sup>. Tackling this issue head on, Commerce Lexington Inc., in partnership with the Bluegrass Small Business Development Center and local financial institutions, created the Access Loan Program. Its mission is to make access to financing easier and to provide useful assistance and resources for new and expanding small businesses. The program has helped facilitate financing of more than \$23 million for small and minority-owned businesses since its inception in 2001, with \$5 million of that figure coming in the last two years. For more information on the Access Loan Program, contact **Tyrone Tyra** at (859) 226-1625 or [tyra@CommerceLexington.com](mailto:tyra@CommerceLexington.com).

<sup>1</sup> *The Balance*, Susan Ward, "Why Getting a Small Business Loan is Difficult," April 27, 2019, [www.thebalancesmb.com/small-business-loan-2947070](http://www.thebalancesmb.com/small-business-loan-2947070).



## CLEX Economic Development By The Numbers:

For 2020 year-to-date, Commerce Lexington's Economic Development Division has responded to calls from:

**New Business:** 26 new prospects interested in finding a new location or expanding.

**Client Visits to the Lexington Area:** 13

**Existing Business Visits:** 76

**Total Active Projects:** 45

**COVID Retention Assists:** 36



## 2020 Salute to Small Business Awards Application Available On-Line Now

Commerce Lexington Inc. began honoring the contributions that small businesses have on our economy in 1986, and since that very first Salute to Small Business event, the impact of small businesses on the global economy has become more important than ever before. If there ever was a year to recognize our small business community, this is it. The year 2020 has certainly tested the strength and resilience of all businesses, but especially small businesses as they've been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Owning and operating a small business under normal circumstances takes great survival skills, but a lengthy economic shutdown has taken that to a whole new level. Small businesses across our region have not only had to adapt and evolve quickly, but many had to find ways to be more innovative and efficient, while others completely changed products or production lines to meet the needs of their customers and the community.

There are so many great stories waiting to be told, and the Commerce Lexington Inc. **2020 Salute to Small Business Awards presented by Forcht Bank** will enable small business owners and entrepreneurs to stand up and be recognized for their positive impacts in the face of adversity.

### WHAT'S NEW FOR 2020:

Commerce Lexington Inc. has streamlined the Salute to Small Business Awards application with a completely on-line format, removing some redundancy and allowing for better descriptions of the success of your business. We have also reduced the number of award categories from eight to four. In addition, the number of employees for a business to be considered

has been increased to under 150 employees (full-time or some combination of full- and part-time as indicated in the awards application).

### ELIGIBILITY:

- Businesses must be active members of Commerce Lexington Inc.
- Businesses must have completed three (3) or more full years of operation in the local market with fewer than 150 employees.
- Small businesses can apply for ONE award category.
- Past Category and overall Small Business of the Year award recipients are not eligible to reapply for 5 years from the date of their award presentation.

### AWARD CATEGORIES:

- **Business Success Award**
- **Entrepreneur Award**
- **Minority Business Award**
- **Nonprofit Community Impact Award\*** (not eligible for overall Small Business of the Year Award)

### APPLY BY AUGUST 3rd OR NOMINATE A SMALL BUSINESS:

Visit on-line at [www.commercelexington.com/salute-to-small-business.html](http://www.commercelexington.com/salute-to-small-business.html) to access the awards application or nominate your favorite small business, and the Commerce Lexington Inc. team will contact the business with all the details on how to apply. **The deadline to submit an application is Monday, August 3rd.**

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## CEO Panel Discussed Pandemic Response During Virtual SPOTLIGHT

When a crisis occurs, the most successful companies, business owners and entrepreneurs are the ones able to face a challenge head-on by adapting to the changing environment. Commerce Lexington Inc.'s recent **SPOTLIGHT Series presented by WealthSouth** featured a panel of company CEO's discussing innovation and lessons learned while dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Scan QR Code to Watch:**



Dynamic CEO's Susan Elkington (Toyota), Sam Mitchell (Valvoline), and Lennie Rhoades (Big Ass Fans), and entrepreneur Toa Green (Crank and Boom Craft Ice Cream) talked about what's worked and what hasn't as they adjust to a new normal for businesses. The webinar was moderated by Ray Daniels, President of Equity Solutions Group and 2020 Commerce Lexington Inc. Board Chair.

Panelists addressed everything from how they handled the early days of the pandemic and the economic shutdown to evaluating supply chain needs to keeping their employees safe and engaged to the more recent focus on navigating the guidelines for reopening. They also talked about shifts in how their companies are now doing business and possible changes to how customers will interact with their businesses in the future. One final question gave the CEO's the opportunity to give their thoughts about the ongoing racial injustice across the country, including how to foster more diversity and inclusion in the workplace and create positive changes across our region.

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## Variety of On-line Resources Available to Help Your Business Reopen Safely

### Review Sample Customer Communications and Business Reopening Plans On-Line

Among its on-line Return to Work resources, Commerce Lexington has posted a variety of sample communications to customers and clients, as well as sample business reopening plans for employees, to help you prepare for the day you welcome your team back to your facility and/or the public back to your store or facility. To review these best practices documents, visit [www.commercelexington.com/return-to-work-resources.html](http://www.commercelexington.com/return-to-work-resources.html).

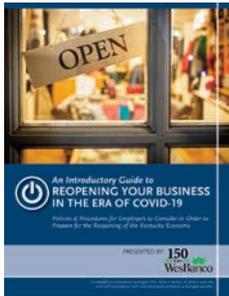
### Purchase Personal Protective Equipment Items From CLX & Other Member Businesses

Commerce Lexington Inc. has compiled a list on-line of member companies who can help supply you with personal protective equipment (PPE), safety signage and cleaning services for your facility. You can also purchase PPE items such as face masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer directly from Commerce Lexington Inc. **Scan the QR code to purchase items on-line from CLX.**



### CLX Launches Starter Guide to Reopening Your Business

As businesses and organizations of all types and sizes work through the process of reopening over the next few weeks and months, Commerce Lexington Inc. has compiled an *Introductory Guide to Reopening Your Business in the Era of COVID-19*, aimed at providing some basic policies and recommendations for all businesses to consider, as well as the minimum requirements put forth by Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear. **Presented by WesBanco Bank**, this publication also includes the reopening schedule, frequently asked questions, and recommendations to help keep your employees and customers safe.



**Scan QR Code to Read Business Reopening Guide:**



### Survey to Gauge Business Reopening Concerns

The CLX team is working hard to provide the right resources for your business as you navigate these challenging times. It helps us immensely to know what concerns and issues are important for you and your business, so that we can relay those concerns to elected officials, connect you with the right people, and provide resources, information and virtual events that will help you as Kentucky's economy reopens. Please take a moment to complete a brief survey about your concerns and needs during the reopening process on-line at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/LKZMWFR](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LKZMWFR).

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## Virtual @330 Event Presents Marketing in Times of Crisis & Limited Budget

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For many businesses, a time of crisis means refocusing and finding innovative ways to both become more efficient and better serve clients and customers. However, in their quest to reduce costs and maintain their bottom line, companies often freeze or cut their marketing budgets to the bare minimum.

Uncertain economic times shouldn't mean that all marketing has to stop. According to Josh Rubin, owner and CEO of Post Modern Marketing, there are plenty of opportunities to promote your business whether you have a budget or not. During the next Commerce Lexington Inc. virtual @330 Series event presented by Distillery Heights on Tuesday, July 14, beginning at 3:30 p.m., Rubin will highlight some low-cost and no-cost things that companies can do to gain visibility, as well as other situations where businesses that have maintained a budget for marketing can benefit from less competition and better pricing in the marketing space.



JOSH RUBIN  
POST MODERN  
MARKETING

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

Josh Rubin started his now nearly 20-year-long digital marketing career in Kentucky as a graphic designer and web developer. Over the duration of his career, he has developed an expertise in marketing strategy, and has run campaigns for both local startups and established nationwide brands. In 2009, he launched his own digital marketing and web design agency in California, now known as Post Modern Marketing, which opened an office in Lexington in 2019.

### TO REGISTER:

The @330 events feature a topical presentation that is relevant to the success of entrepreneurs, business owners and business professionals. Register on-line at [www.CommerceLexington.com](http://www.CommerceLexington.com), and a Zoom event link will be sent to you by e-mail prior to the @330 Series event.

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## AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

### Kelly Tudor, CHI Saint Joseph Health Partners

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KELLY TUDOR

**ABOUT KELLY TUDOR:** Kelly moved to Lexington just before she graduated from Eastern Kentucky University. She said, "I fell in love with the charm of Lexington."

**ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN CLEX:** "It is important to be involved in Commerce Lexington, because it keeps me connected to the community and gives me the ability to network with other businesses," Kelly said. "I love celebrating the new businesses that come to our community with their ribbon cuttings. I also enjoy the Business Link networking events."

WesBanco has been a leader in its communities for many years, and we want to continue to take a leadership role by noting **our stance for equality.**

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With U.S. at a Crossroads, Diversity Day Session Comes at Key Time for Class

PRESENTED BY



*Recap by Cameron Hamilton, Ballast, Inc.*

This year's Leadership Lexington class has developed the flexibility of a world-class yoga instructor. The COVID-19 pandemic became a reality in early March as the participants' year-long community projects were on the cusp of completion. Pivot has become their unofficial mantra, as evidenced by the transformation of April's live class session to a web-based program in June.

In light of current events across our nation and



Lexington Urban-County Councilmembers James Brown and Jennifer Reynolds addressed the Leadership Lexington class virtually during the Diversity Day Session.



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around the world, there may not have been a more timely Diversity Day Session. The class assembled via Zoom on June 11 as nightly protests had spread to most major American cities, including Lexington. Dr. Antomia Farrell, Director for Diversity at the UK College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, led a collaborative session focusing on inclusion and valuing diverse perspectives in both the workplace and our community. As a leader in cultivating diversity in organizations, Dr. Farrell gave a great piece of advice, to "Call In, Not Call Out." Each instance when an individual fails to live up to an organization's values is an opportunity to bring that person into the fold, educate, and empower them to take up the work of inclusion and equity.

The pandemic has become a material factor in all industries, and this importance was reflected in the afternoon panel on systems of inequality amplified by COVID-19. Councilmembers and nonprofit leaders highlighted how disparities in employment, housing, and access to healthcare have left our minority populations disproportionately affected by the virus. For example, Councilmember Jennifer Reynolds discussed how a lack of consistent multilingual messaging left our Spanish-speaking population vulnerable. This point highlighted the importance of cultivating diversity in our community and workplaces. Equity cannot be achieved unless policy and strategy are informed by a diversity of ideas.

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# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## NEW COMMERCE LEXINGTON INC. MEMBERS FOR THE PERIOD OF MAY 22 THROUGH JUNE 19, 2020

### 723 Vapor

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2909 Richmond Road, Suite 60  
Lexington, KY 40509  
Phone: (859) 396-9283  
www.723vapor.com

### AAA Transit

*Transportation Services*  
Main Contact: Emerie Duke  
400 Windom Lane  
Nicholasville, KY 40356  
Phone: (859) 361-8971  
www.aaatransitteam.com

### Bluegrass Truck & Trailer Services

*Auto Repair & Service*  
Main Contact: Shaun Webster  
530 Codell Dr., Lexington, 40509  
Phone: (859) 948-9630  
www.bgttservices.com

### Gaines Dental Lab, Inc.

*Dental Laboratories*  
Main Contact: William Gaines  
620 Perimeter Dr., Suite 204

Lexington, KY 40517  
Phone: (859) 268-8103  
www.gaineslab.com

### Hollenbach Oakley LLC

*Real Estate Commercial*  
Main Contact: Jesse Mindel  
13307 Magisterial Dr.  
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### Kentucky Health Solutions

*Health Insurance*  
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Phone: (859) 309-5033  
www.kentuckyhealthsolutions.com

### Lexington Women's Health

*Health Provider*  
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www.lexingtonwomens.com

### Next Level Facility Solutions

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### Nutrishop Lexington

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### Old World Timber

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### RevLocal

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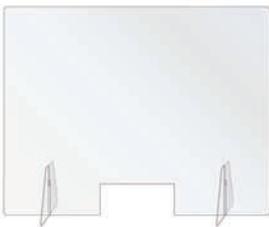
### Wm. Tarr Distillery

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EVENT MANAGEMENT / PLANNING / CONSULTING

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## COMMERCE LEXINGTON: UPCOMING EVENTS

### JULY 2020:

- 1** 4 O'Clock Focus Series featuring topics & speakers that address the business reopening process, 4:00 p.m., virtually on Zoom. Register at [www.CommerceLexington.com](http://www.CommerceLexington.com).
- 14** @330 Series presented by Distillery Heights, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m., virtually on Zoom. - [SEE PAGE 8](#)
- 15** 4 O'Clock Focus Series featuring topics & speakers that address the business reopening process, 4:00 p.m., virtually on Zoom. Register at [www.CommerceLexington.com](http://www.CommerceLexington.com).
- 29** 4 O'Clock Focus Series featuring topics & speakers that address the business reopening process, 4:00 p.m., virtually on Zoom. Register at [www.CommerceLexington.com](http://www.CommerceLexington.com).

### AUGUST 2020:

- 3** Deadline to submit applications for the **2020 Salute to Small Business Awards**. - [SEE PAGE 5](#)

### OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE:

The new **Emerging Leaders of the Bluegrass** initiative continues to conduct its programming virtually for passholders, including a session led by ExecuTrain on **Monday, July 20**, beginning at 1:00 p.m. on work/life balance. To purchase an annual pass, visit [www.EmergingLeadersBG.com](http://www.EmergingLeadersBG.com).

**3-11**

### SEPTEMBER 2020:

**International trip features Imperial Russia** in early September.

### CLEX TEAM IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS:

For the safety of our staff and the public, Commerce Lexington's lobby area and meeting spaces will be closed until it is deemed safe to gather in groups once again. Although our offices are closed to the general public, CLEX remains open for business as our team continues to work on behalf of members, answer phone calls and e-mail messages, and communicate important resources during the COVID-19 pandemic and the reopening process. If you have questions or need assistance for your business, access our staff directory at [www.CommerceLexington.com](http://www.CommerceLexington.com).

### ON-LINE BUSINESS RESOURCES:

There are a lot of resources posted on-line to assist businesses as they work through the reopening process. Here are a few of the things you'll find at [www.CommerceLexington.com](http://www.CommerceLexington.com):

- **Introductory Business Reopening Guide**
- **Sample customer communications & reopening plans**
- **Find personal protective equipment items to purchase**
- **Business-to-business news**
- **Small business loan assistance**
- **Unemployment insurance information**
- **Find immediate job openings**
- **AND MUCH MORE!**