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# LEADERSHIP VISIT

## MISSION STATEMENT

*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.*



# WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

On behalf of Commerce Lexington Inc. and its Board of Directors, I would like to thank you for participating in the 2015 Leadership Visit to Kansas City presented by McBrayer, McGinnis, Leslie & Kirkland, PLLC. You are to be commended for your commitment to our community and region, and your involvement does make a difference.

For more than 75 years, the Leadership Visit has helped expose Central Kentucky leaders to the best of what other communities have to offer, in the hopes of bringing back ideas and opportunities that will further enhance our own region. The fact that so many of you have taken three days out of your busy schedules and time away from your families not only says a lot about the value of these trips, but also speaks volumes about how much you care for our community and the opportunity to make it better.

Kansas City is a vibrant city with a thriving economy driven by thousands of small businesses, tech start-ups, medical research, and headquarters. It offers a low cost of living and affordable business costs, an educated workforce, and its business community is famous for its technology start-ups, life sciences and biotechnology, animal health corridor, architecture and engineering, entrepreneurship, and more.

Leaders there have been very intentional about transforming Kansas City into a city of prominence through the chamber's "Big 5" initiative and the mayor's efforts to make the city best in what he calls the "Four E's" (Education, Employment, Efficiency, and Enforcement). Kansas City's goals are strongly aligned to produce results.

Over the course of the three days, I encourage you to pay particular attention to the process of 'how' Kansas City got to where it is today, drawing parallels to how we can move specific efforts or initiatives forward in Lexington. Keep in mind that we don't want to be Kansas City. We want to be the very best Lexington and Bluegrass Region that we can be.

Thank you again for participating in this trip, and I look forward to interacting with many of you in Kansas City.

Sincerely,



**HERB MILLER**

2015 CHAIRMAN  
COMMERCE LEXINGTON INC.

PRESIDENT,  
COLUMBIA GAS OF  
KENTUCKY





Photo by Bill Straus Photography

## LEADERSHIP VISIT HISTORY

*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.*

## LEADERSHIP VISITS SINCE 1974

2015.....	<b>Kansas City, MO</b>	1994.....	Tampa, FL
2014.....	Charlotte, NC	1993.....	Charlotte, NC
2013.....	Omaha, NE	1992.....	Austin, TX
2012.....	San Antonio, TX	1991.....	Annapolis, MD/Washington, DC
2011.....	Greenville, SC	1990.....	Boca Raton, FL
2010.....	Pittsburgh, PA	1989.....	Tucson, AZ
2009.....	Madison, WI	1988.....	New Orleans, LA
2008.....	Austin, TX	1987.....	Charleston, SC
2007.....	Boulder, CO	1986.....	Nashville, TN
2006.....	Oklahoma City, OK	1985.....	Tulsa, OK
2005.....	Providence, RI	1984.....	Chapel Hill, NC
2004.....	Charleston, SC	1983.....	San Antonio, TX
2003.....	Baltimore, MD/Washington, DC	1982.....	Minneapolis, MN
2002.....	Raleigh, NC	1981.....	Scottsdale, AZ
2001.....	Ann Arbor, MI	1980.....	Orlando, FL
2000.....	Nashville, TN	1979.....	Savannah, GA
1999.....	Portland, OR	1978.....	Jacksonville, FL
1998.....	Mobile, AL	1977.....	Tampa, FL
1997.....	Madison, WI	1976.....	Houston, TX
1996.....	Richmond, VA	1975.....	Washington, DC
1995.....	Greenville, SC	1974.....	Charleston, SC



# A SAMPLING OF COMMUNITY IMPACTS

## 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 yes, even Pittsburgh are looking to consolidate governments modeled after Lexington and Louisville.

## FCPS FACILITIES TAX:

The facilities tax that resulted in nearly \$300 million for Fayette County Public Schools 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.

## EMERGE YP CONFERENCE:

During the visit to **Omaha, Nebraska**, in 2013 there was a heavy focus on how that city has engaged its young professionals. Several people who participated in that trip met with representatives of the Omaha YP group to see how its YP network has been so successful. Upon returning to Lexington, a group was formed to plan and organize a young professionals conference called EMERGE. This year featured the second annual EMERGE Conference.

## 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. Thursday Night Live is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2015.

## ACCESS LOAN PROGRAM:

Since its inception, nearly \$13 million in loans has been approved for the start or expansion of small, minority-owned, and women-owned business in the Greater Lexington area. This innovative program was created after the visit to **Nashville, Tennessee** (2000), and has now been replicated in other surrounding counties.

## COMMITMENT TO TRAIL SYSTEM:

Upon seeing cities like **Oklahoma City, Boulder, Austin, and Madison**, 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. The 8-mile Legacy Trail, which extends from downtown to the Kentucky Horse Park north of Lexington, has been a huge asset for our community.

## 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 \$8.7 million since November 2005 from a variety of private businesses and construction companies, LFUCG, Blue Grass Airport, the University of Kentucky, and the state of Kentucky.

## RIVER BLAST FESTIVAL:

River Blast festival, which was held in 2014, was organized to create more awareness and access to the opportunities of the Kentucky River. The idea for the festival initially came from the inter-city visit to **Providence, Rhode Island**, in 2005. Community leaders there created something called the WaterFire festival, which extends throughout the summer months and into the fall. This year's River Blast included a paddling race, car show, food, arts and crafts vendors, live entertainment and fireworks at Fort Boonesborough State Park in Richmond.

## VISION LEXINGTON PROJECT:

Going into the **San Antonio** trip in 2012, the decision was made to utilize the Leadership Lexington program as a potential conduit to move some of the recommendations forward. One group's class project took on the recommendation for enhanced way-finding signage downtown. After collaborating with organizations like the DDA and DLC and working through logistics with VisitLEX, Kentucky Utilities, and LFUCG, the project continues to progress toward positively impacting downtown Lexington.



# STAY CONNECTED IN KANSAS CITY

Commerce Lexington Inc. Leadership Visits contain a heavy dose of brainstorming combined with informational sessions and networking receptions. Over the years, the planning committee has embraced a variety of methods to spark dialogue among participants, adapting to new technologies available like social media and texting. Below you'll find a number of ways that you can add to the conversation and share your experiences and ideas during the trip. If you have any questions about any of these communications methods, contact Mark Turner at [mturner@CommerceLexington.com](mailto:mturner@CommerceLexington.com). These methods not only help connect those on the trip, but they also engage those back in Lexington who want to know what you are experiencing in Kansas City.



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Follow updates at [www.instagram.com/CommerceLex/#](http://www.instagram.com/CommerceLex/#) and post photos of Kansas City using the hashtags **#bgvisit** and **#lexky**.



## TEXT ALERTS

Sign up to receive **TEXT ALERTS** from Commerce Lexington, such as key agenda reminders & changes by texting keyword **KC** to **511511**.

## KEY ATTENDEE INFORMATION

### HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS:

InterContinental Kansas City at the Plaza  
401 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, MO 64112  
Phone: (816) 756-1500  
Web: [www.kansascityic.com](http://www.kansascityic.com)

### DRESS CODE:

We encourage everyone to be comfortable during the trip. Casual or smart casual is appropriate. Evening events on Wednesday and Thursday are business casual, with coat and tie optional. Please remember to wear your nametag at all sessions and events.

### TIME ZONE:

Kansas City is on Central Time.

### MEALS & REFRESHMENTS:

Meals and refreshment breaks included are indicated in the agenda. If you have any food allergies or requests that you did not submit on your attendee form, please see Katie Hardwick.

### KEY CONTACTS:

If you have a question or concern that comes up during the trip and you need assistance, you may contact either of the following CLX staff members:

**Katie Hardwick: (859) 351-5554**

**Lynda Bebrowsky: (859) 333-5558**

