

A Northern Kentucky Community Profile

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Northern Kentucky, Cincinnati, and  
the Ohio River as seen from Devou Park  
in Covington

Photo by Jeff Rogers

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# Northern Kentucky Creates Economic Growth



The development of Covington's Riverfront is an impressive sight from downtown Cincinnati.



Courtesy of Northern Kentucky University

Northern Kentucky University President Dr. James C. Votruba makes a point to President George W. Bush during the chief executive's recent visit to Northern Kentucky. Representative Geoff Davis of Northern Kentucky's 4th Congressional District, applauds President Bush's remarks from the podium.

During an hour-long speech in May, President George W. Bush paid the ultimate compliment to Northern Kentucky, touting the newly created College of Informatics at Northern Kentucky University and lauding the community for its progressive outlook in math and science education.

"If our children don't have the skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century, the jobs are going to go somewhere else," the president told a crowd of about 2,000 that had gathered to hear his economic-initiatives presentation May 19 at NKU's Regents Hall. Northern Kentucky, he insisted, is on the right track when it comes to preparing its coming generations for the workforce that looms ahead.

That is a message that resonates loud and clear at the northernmost edge of the Bluegrass State, a three-county region that over the past two decades has become the vanguard for Kentucky's economy, adding jobs, new home construction and inviting new businesses at a pace acclaimed both statewide and nationally.

Boone County, home to the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, is the destination of choice for many new businesses and industries that call the

Tri-State region home. Kenton County, with a population of more than 150,000, provides the region's urban core with Covington and its impressive high-rises downtown. And Campbell County has become the market's entertainment destination of choice with the Newport Aquarium, Newport on the Levee and the fascinating Purple People Bridge.

Northern Kentucky has, for the past 30 years or so, benefited from its proximity to Cincinnati and a region with an overall population of nearly two million. At the same time, Northern Kentucky has maintained its small-town feel, that sense of Southern hospitality that is evident just as soon as you cross the Ohio River and enter the commonwealth.

#### Planning to succeed

More than a quarter century ago, then Gov. John Y. Brown helped initiate a set of planning objectives for orderly growth at Kentucky's northern end, seeking the consolidation of government entities when possible and laying the foundation for future growth by providing the infrastructure necessary for expansion to the counties, especially in the transportation sector.

That was no more visible than at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, where ample room for runway and facilities expansion, coupled with plenty of available cheap land surrounding it, fueled the current upward trend in the addition of industry and jobs for the region.

"The airport is, and will continue to be, vital to the well-being of Northern Kentucky and indeed the rest of Greater Cincinnati," said Dan Tobergte, president and CEO of the Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation. "The airport is the differentiating factor that this community has over surrounding comparable cities. We do compete with Lexington and Louisville to a certain degree, but we also compete against Indianapolis, Columbus, Raleigh, Nashville and other cities."

Kenton County Judge-Executive Ralph Drees agrees. "High-paying jobs are moving into our region as companies realize the advantage of having an international airport," he said.

Another differentiating factor is the quality of Northern Kentucky's workforce. "I think the Northern Kentucky workforce is much better than average in terms of education and drive. There is not a big union influence here. The education and business community collaborates closely to match what is needed with what is produced," said Campbell County Judge-Executive Steve Pendery.

His counterpart in Boone County agrees. "Our people possess a great work ethic. They are hard working, dependable, and for the most part well educated. Also, people are willing to move here to fill the new jobs," Judge-Executive Gary Moore said.

To continue to be able to fill those new positions, leaders in the region, from educators at Northern Kentucky University and local school districts to workforce development analysts, are constantly monitoring the workforce's status. Two boosts on the workforce front came from the Kentucky General Assembly this year in the form of funding for NKU's new College of Informatics, as well as monies for Gateway Community and Technical College's Canter

tion base," said Thomas Banta, executive vice president of Corporex, a Covington-based commercial and residential development company with more than \$1 billion in assets. "What is less widely known is that Northern Kentucky has developed into a region-leading office market. We have attracted Fortune 500 headquarters like Ashland, Omnicare and Toyota Engineering and Manufacturing, North America.



Staff photo

for Advanced Manufacturing Competitiveness, which will serve as one of the many tools available in the region to insure that current workers are upgraded and future workers can receive the kinds of training they'll need to succeed, according to Nancy Spivey, vice president for workforce solutions at the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

#### Best of both worlds

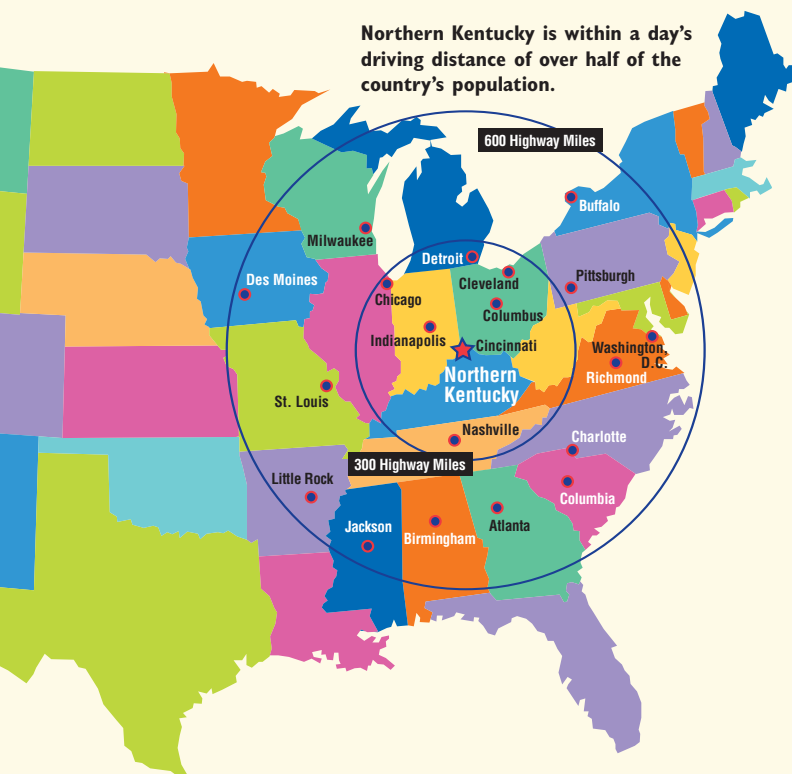
A marketing campaign years ago pegged Northern Kentucky as the southern side of Cincinnati, a branding initiative that had supporters and critics alike, but one that reflected some of the region's self-realization.

"Northern Kentucky has historically been known as a bedroom community of Cincinnati with a strong industrial/distribu-

**A spirit of cooperation is what makes the Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation successful. Pictured in the Tri-ED board room, seated left to right, are Judge-Executive Gary W. Moore of Boone County; Judge Executive Ralph Drees of Kenton County, and; Judge-Executive Steve Pendery of Campbell County. Standing left to right are Dan Tobergte, president and CEO of Tri-ED, and attorney Bill Robinson, a Tri-ED founding board member.**

The market has an abundant supply of office products and routinely competes for regional and national headquarters."

The bedroom-community image began to change when the recession of 1981 ended and bulldozers were digging full-force at



sites such as the Corporex CirclePort campus – where Toyota would build its North American headquarters – and Covington's massive business district and industrial park, where Fidelity Investments settled several key operations from Massachusetts at a site

largest single-line drywall production facility, producing 900 million square feet of the product annually.

And while the region flexed its commercial muscle, governmental cooperation in Northern Kentucky allowed the region to create

that continues to expand.

Citing advantages such as support services, a strong labor pool, superior telecommunications services and lower operating costs, Kevin Canafax, site general manager of Fidelity Investments Midwest Region Campus in Covington says, "The entire package made our decision to build our regional headquarters in Northern Kentucky an easy one."

The shores of the Ohio River also boomed along tiny Silver Grove in Campbell County, where Lafarge Gypsum opened its

opportunities for economic growth. There are many examples of officials from local governments and economic development organizations working together to sell the region to prospective companies. Because of this cooperation, the region has scored no small sum of victories, such as the arrival a couple years ago of Munich, Germany-based Hofbrauhaus in Newport, beating several proposed locations in Southwest Ohio.

Those illustrations are commonplace in Northern Kentucky, according to Kenton County Judge-Executive Ralph Drees, who has witnessed the rapid growth from the helm of Northern Kentucky-based homebuilding giant Drees Company, which constructs homes in Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, North Carolina, Texas and the Washington, D.C. metro area. "There is a true sense in Northern Kentucky that cooperation, not confrontation, wins the day," he said.

Northern Kentuckians take advantage of their proximity to the Queen City, where professional baseball and football lead among spectator sports for locals and visitors alike. Museums, performance outlets such as historic Music Hall and the new Aronoff Center for the Arts, Paramount's Kings Island amusement park, River Downs and hundreds of other attractions are at the root of the region's frequent appearance on various "most livable" lists. Quality health care services are provided by St. Elizabeth Medical Center and the St. Luke Hospitals,

## Region's Success Garners Tri-ED Two National Honors

For nearly two decades, the Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation has ridden at the crest of the phenomenal wave of business and industrial growth in this area of the commonwealth, a region that with only 8 percent of the state's population churned out 26 percent of Kentucky's capital investments in 2005. That, according to Tri-ED President and CEO Dan Tobergte, equates to 41 new and expanding projects generating \$444 million in capital investment and almost 3,000 new jobs with an average annual salary of \$54,965.

In light of that success, Tri-ED has received two prestigious national honors. First, Tri-ED was named one of 12 national finalists for the 2006 Economic Development Leadership Awards by CoreNet Global, the world's leading professional association of corporate real estate executives. Finalists were named in two categories: Leadership and innovation, and major projects/deals. Northern Kentucky Tri-ED was the only group recognized in both categories.

"Northern Kentucky has enjoyed tremendous success as an economic engine for the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the Cincinnati area," said Campbell County Judge-Executive Steve Pendery. "That success is driven by our strong community partnerships and this region's ability to attract diverse, growing companies to the area."

The 12 finalists made presentations on their best practices and

innovations at Princeton University in March to a panel of Fortune 500 real estate executives.

"The CoreNet Global Economic Development Leadership Award recognizes organizations such as Northern Kentucky Tri-ED that exemplify the best practices, innovations and partnerships shaping the increasingly strategic role of economic development in corporate real estate and workplace management," said Richard Kadzis, director of special projects and media relations at CoreNet Global.

In May, *Site Selection* magazine named Tri-ED to its annual list of the nation's Top 10 Economic Development Groups. Considering there are over 6,000 economic development organizations across the country, this recognition was quite an honor.

The award winners were selected by *Site Selection* editors based upon the development organizations' overall performance in the following categories: total capital investment; jobs created; investment per capita; jobs per capita; overall economic vitality; depth and breadth of economic strength; diversity of industry; ability to generate breakthrough deals; and the overall quality of the group's nomination package, including verifiable documentation for all projects.

"In the nearly 20 years since it was founded, Northern Kentucky Tri-ED has propelled our economy with more than \$4 billion in capital investment and the creation of more than 40,000 jobs," Tobergte said. "It's gratifying for the region to receive national recognition for that success."

### CoreNet Global Awards Finalist 2006



and the region boasts nine institutes of higher education, including NKU.

"These are all the kinds of amenities that planners look at when they are deciding whether to move their company to a new location," said Dave Postolowski, a business director for the Ticona Company. Postolowski, who was on the committee that helped frame the decision to move Ticona's U.S. headquarters from New Jersey to Northern Kentucky, explained that the region's relatively low cost of living, easy access to international airport transportation and the accoutrements of living available on both sides of the river were key factors for his team's recommendation.

"When we were presented with reasons for relocating the headquarters here, everything was done right," Postolowski said. A parade of officials, from Boone County's Moore, to chamber leaders and Tri-ED's Tobergte and his staff, left no stone unturned in ensuring the New Jersey-based company had all the information needed to make their decision to move. "In the end, the region really sold itself," Postolowski said.

#### A region looks to the future

Northern Kentucky is able to "sell itself" to prospective businesses and a highly skilled and educated workforce because of an ability to maintain focus on growth, according to Bob Farrell, associate provost for economic development initiatives at Northern Kentucky University.

Farrell noted that initiatives coming from his office at NKU are being put into place to take advantage of both the large number of small, high-tech companies operating in the market, the strength of growth from larger firms – many of them global in scope – as well as a young, upcoming workforce that is participating in cooperative employment opportunities in conjunction with the university.

"If you are a business owner or a corporate executive looking in at the region from outside, I believe you have to be impressed with the kinds of resources that are available" at NKU and from agencies in and around Northern Kentucky, Farrell said. "I am very impressed with the level of cooperation that exists in Northern Kentucky."

Tri-ED's Tobergte is banking on that spirit of cooperation as he looks at his agency's objectives in the near term.

"We will continue to seek very positive growth through what we call primary industries," Tobergte said. "That spans advanced manufacturing through financial services to corporate headquarters all locating here." Among the objectives, he said, are to attract companies that have average wages per person higher than \$45,000 annually, growing the economy at a pace of 1,300 new jobs per year.

And things are happening in the region to make that possible. "There are several projects that have come on line in the past few years, led by Roger Griggs and his Union Springs


LLC," Tobergte said. "We are working bigger and better in the life sciences field" in Northern Kentucky. "We have a commercialization triangle effort now under way directly around Northern Kentucky University. We won't be a research triangle as such, but Bob Farrell's mantra at NKU is to find research processes that have not been commercialized and try to bring those to the market and shorten the time to market for them."

Griggs, who serves on Tri-ED's board, noted that one intriguing project is being dubbed the League of Investors, a group of business leaders with some financial girth who want to further invest in Northern Kentucky by acquiring businesses and relo-

cating them to the region. "It is still in its early stages," Griggs said.

Tobergte said that regional leaders want advanced manufacturing to keep pace with local business growth. Currently, about 20 percent of the commercial culture is involved in manufacturing. "But we want to see the service sector grow," he said. "That will be the sector here that ultimately will produce the most jobs" in the future.

Perhaps the bright outlook for Northern Kentucky can best be summed up by Dr. G. Edward Hughes, president and CEO of Gateway Community and Technical College. "This community really cares about creating opportunity for today and tomorrow," he said. ■



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**Students in the electrical technology program at Gateway Community and Technical College are shown working on electric circuitry at Gateway's new state-of-the-art Boone County campus facility.**

University, noted that in order for Northern Kentucky to maintain a competitive edge in the commercial realm, workforce development and training upgrades have to be on the front burner to meet the demands of the digital age.

NKU's new College of Informatics, a pioneer program that merges the digital universe and information technology with other disciplines, will provide graduates with unique skill sets to prepare them for work with cutting-edge companies both locally and regionally, according to Dr. Doug Perry, new head of the school.

Maintaining vigil on workforce development at the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce is Nancy Spivey, vice president for workforce and education, who explained that numerous private-sector initiatives help bolster the programming initiated at Northern Kentucky University as well as Gateway Community and Technical College.

Spivey said the region's unique mix of innovative manufacturers, headquarters, distribution centers and other businesses creates a blend of challenges and opportunities for filling key positions within those companies. The key, she said, is to insure that the region is able to stay ahead of employers' demands from the labor pool.

This year, Spivey noted that the Northern Kentucky Manufacturing Alliance Council was formed, headed by Rick Jordan, president of LSI Graphic Solutions. It was developed with an eye toward training and development for the labor force needed to support the 400 manufacturers operating in Northern Kentucky at the industry's peer level, allowing direct input from manufacturing captains to shift their training assets as needed.

Keeping close tabs on education and training is a critical factor for growth in the region, but the payoff can be tremendous, noted Dan Tobergte, president and CEO of Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation. He cited as an example Fidelity Investments' announcement last year that it was spending \$120 million to expand its 180-acre Covington campus, adding 1,500 jobs to its current base of 2,700 workers. Fidelity committed to the growth here, Tobergte said, because they knew the workforce is here to support that expansion.

"Our people possess a great work ethic" says Boone County Judge-Executive Gary Moore. "They are hard working, dependable, and for the most part well educated. People are willing to move here to fill the new jobs because this is a great place to live, work, and raise a family." ■

Courtesy of Gateway Community and Technical College

## The Right Skills for the Job

Education programs keep workers on the cutting edge

**N**orthern Kentuckians have enjoyed a long history of being industrious, hard workers – witnessed by the region's ties to employers such as Toyota Engineering and Manufacturing, North America and various firms involved in the machine-tool industry, among hundreds of other fields.

According to Dr. G. Edward Hughes, president and CEO of Gateway Community and Technical College, manufacturing accounts for more than 22,000 jobs and generates over \$1 billion in annual earnings in Northern Kentucky. However, Dr. Hughes says a recent survey of manufacturers showed there are currently about 600 area manufacturing jobs that are open or under-filled. That same survey, he says, revealed that Northern Kentucky manu-

facturers expect to replace more than 3,600 workers who are scheduled to retire in the next 10 years.

In order to address this need, Gateway Community and Technical College received \$28 million in funding this year from the state legislature to construct a new Center for Advanced Manufacturing Competitiveness. When completed, the center will provide advanced training for more than 10,000 workers and will serve an estimated 200 firms. According to Dr. Hughes, it will help erase the skills gap for Northern Kentucky workers and manufacturers. "We estimate that 1,000 new jobs will be created within five years of the CAMC's startup because of the beneficial impact on the workforce" says Dr. Hughes.

Another education leader, Dr. James Votruba, president of Northern Kentucky



**NKU's new College of Informatics will be housed in the Science Center on campus until a new \$36 million facility is completed.**

## Business Accelerator Boosts Technology Companies

**H**igh-tech companies in Northern Kentucky are getting a boost from the Northern Kentucky E-Zone, the area's first and only business accelerator that serves start-up, emerging and existing businesses.

A non-profit corporation, the E-Zone seeks to enrich and strengthen the technology community in Northern Kentucky by creating opportunities for technological innovation and economic development.

The concept for Northern Kentucky E-Zone began in the minds of five area business people who came up with the idea of an accelerator and incubator located in Northern Kentucky. When the state passed the Kentucky Innovation Act of 2000, the E-Zone was designated as one of the state's seven Innovation and Commercialization Centers and became eligible for funding.

Casey Barach was hired as executive director in July 2001, and Northern Kentucky E-Zone began accepting its first resident companies when it opened in September 2001.

Much of the E-Zone's success has come through its client education program, an extensive program that teaches clients the skills necessary to successfully promote and manage their business.

The E-Zone also reaches out to local colleges and universities to help provide education to Northern Kentucky's students. In addition, the E-Zone educates the community as a whole with a monthly lunch seminar called the "Know-How Network" that is geared toward the various aspects of running a business and that anyone can attend. ■

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**From its main campus in Edgewood, the St. Elizabeth Medical Center has a long history of serving the healthcare needs of Northern Kentuckians since 1861.**

Photos courtesy of St. Elizabeth Medical Center

## The Best Health Care Anywhere

Quality hospitals and medical centers attract families, businesses

Few things are more important to families seeking the best in quality of life than access to great health care. In Northern Kentucky, two medical institutions make up only part of the vast health care mosaic on both sides of the Ohio River. In Kenton County, the two main campuses of the St. Elizabeth Medical Center provide a complete spectrum of health care to the nine-county region in the northern end of the commonwealth, offering complete care, from prenatal support to a vast spectrum of cancer care and cardiac services. The St. Luke Hospitals, located in Campbell and Boone counties, are members of The Health Alliance, the largest regional health care system comprised of both St. Luke campuses; Christ, Jewish and University hospitals in Cincinnati; and Fort Hamilton Hospital in Hamilton, Ohio. Doctors who are members of Alliance Primary Care also are part of that system.

"Issues such as great health care are very important in attracting businesses to a region," said Dave Postolowski, business director for the Ticona company, which located its national headquarters from New Jersey to Florence last year. "The access to great health care from Northern Kentucky certainly was one of the overall factors that helped us decide to move here."

The St. Elizabeth Medical Center, founded in 1861, with campuses in Edgewood, Covington and Williamstown, recently was named a magnet hospital by the American Nurses Credentialing Center,

one of the top achievements in the industry, according to Jane Swaim, vice president and chief nursing officer at St. Elizabeth. "We are beyond proud to be recognized as one of the top nursing programs in the country," she said. "This is the ultimate confirmation of what we've long known, that St. Elizabeth nurses are among the best." Swaim noted that fewer than 3 percent of hospitals nationwide qualify for the recognition. St. Elizabeth Medical Center also has been recognized as one of the best places for nurses to work in the region, another factor in its receiving the magnet designation.

The chief beneficiary from such an award is the patient, according to St. Elizabeth president and CEO, Joe Gross. "The public should feel comforted knowing that a magnet level hospital is available in their community."

Besides its prowess in providing excellent nursing care, St. Elizabeth Medical Center also was rated among the best in the nation in patient safety, according to HealthGrades, an organization that

evaluates hospital quality for consumers, corporations, hospitals and health plans.

"Patient safety is an all-encompassing process for us," Gross added.

For many years, the St. Luke Hospitals have been a leader in patient care and advanced technology, providing health care first in Ft. Thomas, and later in Florence when it acquired the former Booth Hospital. St. Luke's was the site of the first pacemaker being installed in Northern Kentucky, and it has led the way with its Regional Vascular Institute and Center for Breast health.

The St. Luke Hospitals also have taken the lead in the region providing comprehensive women's health services, offering a wide array of services that includes infertility treatment, birthing options, as well as breast-cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Besides its campuses in Ft. Thomas and Florence, the system operates pediatric centers in Bellevue and Florence, sports health and wellness centers in Burlington and Florence, the Northern Kentucky Children's Advocacy Center in Bellevue and the Center for Drug and Alcohol Treatment in Falmouth.

"Health care is one of the quality of life issues that is critical in helping us attract and keep the best workforce available," said Dr. James Votruba, president of Northern Kentucky University and a co-chair of the recently released Vision 2015 master plan for the Northern Kentucky region. "We are fortunate not only to have great hospitals here, but we also have immediate access to the many hospitals in Cincinnati. When you look at the whole (health care) picture, you see that we have access to some of the best health care anywhere." ■



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**Three jets prepare to land simultaneously at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. CVG is one of only five airports in the world with runway facilities that allow triple simultaneous takeoffs and landings.**

55,000 other regional jobs, CVG – the airport’s three-letter designator chosen for the nearby city of Covington – pumps more than \$4.5 billion annually into the local economy.

As the airport has grown over the years, it has become increasingly evident that this city-sized endeavor has been a purveyor of prosperity, attracting new business and industry to the region.

“With 500 daily flights to 120 cities worldwide, including London and Paris to the east and Honolulu to the west, our airport is ideally located within an hour’s flight time of 50 percent of the American population” Robinson said.

“The airport’s impact is huge. There’s no other way to put it,” said Mark Perryman, president of Cincinnati-based Landrum & Brown, an airport planning company. “Just in terms of the impact the airport has on the overall psyche of businesses in the region, you cannot ever underestimate the impact it has on a multi-county area.”

Joe Feiertag, an airport spokesman, said that a recent study by the University of Cincinnati provides an illustration of CVG’s importance to the area’s economy. For every flight leaving CVG, an average of \$18,000 is imparted on the region. Add to that the fact that airport construction projects are expected to bring nearly \$1 billion into the local economy over the next 12 years, as well as the impact from tourism and airport-related spending over the next few years, the annual addition to collective economic coffers here is anticipated to reach nearly \$7 billion by 2011.

Even more critical is that by 2011, airport officials say they expect nearly 120,000 jobs to be created, either directly or indi-

## Gateway to Success

Airport creates critical impact on region’s economy

**D**espite growing challenges in the airline industry, the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport remains critical for continued economic development in this section of Kentucky. Even in light of tough times for Delta Air Lines, the airport’s primary tenant, leaders in the region feel the airport will continue to pump plenty of ener-

gy, cash and intangible economic assets into the economy.

“Our airport is, for Northern Kentucky and all of Kentucky, the gateway to national and global markets so essential to our current and continued growth and prosperity” says Bill Robinson, chair of the Kenton County Airport Board.

Employing more than 15,000 workers at the airport itself, and supporting nearly

rectly, by all the activities generated in and around the airport.

"The airport does continue to be the key component for economic development for the region," said Steve Stevens, senior vice president for public affairs at the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. "We constantly see companies relocating here or expanding in the region because of the convenience of the airport and the efficient air service that is available here. We continue to believe that the airport will need to expand in the coming years to meet the demand that is very likely to grow in the region."

Notwithstanding the challenges to the air transport industry after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, CVG has had a remarkable record of success in numerous categories of service and capacity that are the envy of the industry.

The airport has several things going for it that have placed it well ahead of other airports throughout the nation. CVG is the first airport east of the Mississippi River, and one of only five in the world, to have the operating efficiency of three parallel independent runways, literally tripling the number of aircraft that can land or take off at any given moment, a boon to airlines seeking on-time arrivals and departures.

Only four airports in the nation serve more cities than CVG. The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport serves more cities than the airports in the Washington, D.C. region, more than Los Angeles, and even more than the New York City airports.

It is that accessibility that keeps CVG on the front burner for relocation planners. Foreign firms wanting to locate within the United States have chosen Northern Kentucky or Cincinnati as their U.S. presence, and that has meant a tripling of foreign firms in the region since 1987.

"One needs to look no further than Toyota's North American headquarters here in Boone and Kenton counties to see the impact of our world class airport," says Boone County Judge Executive Gary Moore.

The airport's economic impact remains strong. "We've been fortunate throughout the past few years to be well-positioned and better than the industry as a whole. The airport remains in good shape. That has been a result of great planning, good employees and modern facilities. Delta's facilities as a hub are state of the art. The airfield has kept the cost of doing business reasonable for tenants, and we upgrade often," Feiertag said.

"The bottom line, I think, is that we do what any good city does. We have a sound infrastructure in place that provides an outstanding environment for our customers – the airlines – to operate. I think we are among the best at doing just that." ■



Courtesy of Wootpert, LLP

The approach to the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport is a familiar sight to air travelers. Last year, over 22 million air passengers traveled through the airport.

A photograph of a hand holding a large, light-colored sign that reads "MEETING GUARANTEE" in bold, black, serif capital letters. The sign is held in front of the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, which is a large, modern building with a prominent circular glass and steel structure. The scene is set at dusk or dawn, with a purple and blue sky. The building's lights are on, and the overall atmosphere is professional and modern.

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Photos courtesy of the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Named the number one aquarium in the Midwest in the Zagat Survey's U.S. Family Travel Guide, the state-of-the-art Newport Aquarium at Newport on the Levee is open to the public 365 days a year.**

## There's So Much to Do

Tourism brings people, dollars into Northern Kentucky region

From the Hofbrauhaus beer garden, guests can tip a liter of tangy brew, enjoy a fresh-grilled bratwurst and lift a glass to cheer almost any occasion, all with the backdrop of Cincinnati's downtown skyline and its evening lights.

The view is from the northern edge of the commonwealth, where for decades the city of Newport struggled with its image as Sin City, mobsters running amok in numerous gin joints and crumbling old structures giving way to a decaying urban district that seemed to be well past its prime.

But that image is relevant no more.

Northern Kentucky in general, and Newport specifically, mark the region's entertainment showcase that includes the trendy shops and restaurants at Newport on the Levee, the internationally acclaimed Newport Aquarium, and many river-based restaurants on both the Newport and Covington shores of the Ohio River. Hofbrauhaus, the famous Munich, Germany-based brewery and restaurant, had been sought by Cincinnati developers and community leaders for a couple of years when the German firm announced its intention to open its first U.S. location in the region. An aggressive marketing committee headed by leaders from Newport and Northern Kentucky convinced Hofbrauhaus management that the best location for the Cincinnati market was across the river, in Northern Kentucky.

In Covington, the new Northern Kentucky Convention Center has placed the

region on the convention map nationally, and historic destinations such as the old German neighborhood called MainStrasse Village add to the overall tourism experience one can find in the region.

Tom Caradonio, president and CEO of the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau, notes that tourism and convention dollars are big business in Northern Kentucky, with the impact of spending in Kenton, Campbell and Boone Counties reaching an all-time high of \$255 million in 2005, up more than 8 percent from 2004 at \$235 million. The previous record was \$243 million, set in 2000.

"Of the \$255 million in total economic impact, the lodging category accounted for nearly half at \$129 million, followed by restaurants at \$57 million, shopping \$30.3 million, entertainment at \$18 million and local transportation \$13.9 million," Caradonio said. "Corporate travelers continue to be the largest market segment in Northern Kentucky at 39 percent, followed by leisure at 35 percent, meetings and conventions at 24 percent and government with 2 percent."

And while the revenues generated by the overall tourism trade in Northern Kentucky are impressive, the importance of the entire region has to be taken into consideration when one closely analyzes the Northern Kentucky market outside of the "regional" context, according to Dr. James Votruba, president of Northern Kentucky University.

"There is no question that Northern Ken-

tucky benefits from being within the overall Greater Cincinnati market," he said. "The intangibles for attracting and maintaining a viable workforce certainly include the kinds of attractions that will bring tourists to town, and we have plenty of that kind of benefit here."

Facilities for both the Cincinnati Reds major league baseball team and the Cincinnati Bengals football team are located in downtown Cincinnati. Located between the stadiums is the newly completed Underground Railroad Freedom Center – a facility dedicated to the Queen City's vital role as a stop along the Civil War-era route to freedom for former slaves.

Cincinnati also is home to a bevy of museums, including the Cincinnati Art Museum, in its day the largest collection of art west of the Allegheny Mountains; the Taft museum, a private collection of art garnered over several generations by descendants of former U.S. President William Howard Taft; and the Contemporary Arts Museum, housed in a spectacular new structure designed by Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid; and the soon-to-open Creationism Museum located in Hebron in Boone County. Stage performances from the national Broadway Series to dance extravaganzas and other touring plays have found a home at the Aronoff Center for the Arts.

"There is so much to do in the region, it's hard to give it justice at only a glance," said Tricia Suit, director of publicity for the Taft Museum. "I think we take for granted (living in Northern Kentucky) that we have access to all that the region has to offer, not only in Kentucky but in Cincinnati and the surrounding counties, going all the way up to Kings Island. I personally think Northern Kentucky, because of its own attractions and those that are available in Ohio, is easily the best, single destination for tourists in the state." ■



**The 100-foot Carroll Chimes Bell Tower at MainStrasse Village in Covington may be Northern Kentucky's most photographed outdoor landmark.**



**Built in 1998, the Northern Kentucky Convention Center has established a national reputation as a state-of-the-art, well-managed meeting facility.**

in the top Trade Show 200 list, is focused on getting as big as it can; Cincinnati's convention facility, suffering in recent years because it couldn't attract the large events that Louisville or Indianapolis were garnering, is currently completing another expansion. And convention facilities in Lexington, Paducah, Somerset and Ashland all were structured to take on mostly small conventions and shows.

Completed in 1998, the state-owned facility, which is run by a private management company, has 110,000 square feet of meeting, exhibition and social function space, and features 8,000 square feet of public space that is specifically designed to handle group registration, exhibits and receptions, according to Gretchen Landrum, director of sales and marketing at the center.

The Brereton C. Jones Exhibition Center offers 46,200 square feet of space for up to 235 10-foot booths. Receptions in the hall can hold up to 3,000 people — and the hall can be divided to handle simultaneous activities, Landrum said.

The Ballroom and Conference Level has four large meeting rooms totaling 13,288 square feet that can be divided into 10 breakout rooms. The 22,800-square-foot ballroom can be divided as well, creating five separate spaces.

On the technical side, the convention center is state-of-the-art, featuring high-tech audio-visual capacity, with fiber optic ISDN Internet access and satellite downlink capacity for national or international connectivity.

And, Landrum said, the Northern Kentucky Convention Center offers top-of-the-line service and support that includes its planning staff and the center's in-house catering company, Masterpiece Creations, which provides full-service catering for any size group, from a company picnic to a sit-down dinner for nearly 1,500. Landrum said the convention center offers virtually every other service convention-goers would find at a large hotel facility, including additional services such as word processing and office peripherals. "We found that our target customer was used to having their meetings or conventions at large hotels, so we had to make sure they were comfortable with what we had to offer."

"We're very proud of the strong reputation the center has developed in the region and the state" says Charles Wheeler, executive director of the Northern Kentucky Convention Center. "It proves that one-on-one customer service has a place the age of cyberspace technology." ■

## Building a National Reputation

Convention center brings people, money into region

**A**dding to the recent riverfront development in Covington is the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, the 204,000-square-foot facility that has drawn attention for Northern Kentucky from meeting planners and show coordinators nationwide.

The center has been instrumental in helping pump hundreds of thousands of dollars into hotels, restaurants and retailers, creating hundreds of jobs for workers on both sides of the Ohio River and delivering tens of thousands of visitors to Cincinnati Reds and Bengals' games and into attractions like Newport Aquarium, Covington's Riverfront and Newport on the Levee.

"It certainly has transformed Covington from a kind of sleepy place where little was happening to a vibrant business center," said John Gurren, general manager of Embassy Suites in Covington. The Northern Kentucky Convention Center also has provided the promise of a steady stream of visitors for conventions, meetings and specialty shows, which in turn created a building boom that brought new hotels and restaurants into being. "Without the center, I doubt very much that a lot of the projects we've seen coming here would even have been considered," Gurren said.

"The convention center has made a big difference for most of the restaurants around here," said restaurateur Jimmy Gilliece, co-owner of Chez Nora's in MainStrasse Village. "Our business has picked up just from the people working in the hospitality industry that has been booming here. Visitors will ask the hotel folks where to find a good restaurant, and that business gets funneled to us. Everybody benefits."

In the early 1990s, Gurren said there was a sense that Northern Kentucky was the perfect location for a regional convention facility, an all-purpose center that could host groups of from 500 to 2,000 or so, complementing Cincinnati's Sabin Convention Center which, before its current expansion, could hold a convention of about 10,000. With seed money from the state and studies by groups such as the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Kentucky Restaurant Association, the hunch that the region was ready for its own convention facility was confirmed.

The creators of the Northern Kentucky Convention Center also looked at other facilities in the region and statewide, noting that strategically placing the facility in a small to medium convention niche would pay huge dividends. Louisville, ranked fifth

# Boone County

www.boonecountyky.org



## BOONE COUNTY JUDGE-EXECUTIVE

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## BOONE COUNTY POPULATION (2005)

102,303

## TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS

37,617

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2005 (MEDIAN)

\$59,329

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2005 (AVERAGE)

\$70,428

## MEDIAN AGE

33.1

## BOONE COUNTY'S THREE LARGEST CITIES

(2005 Population)

Florence.....	26,319
Union.....	3,725
Walton .....	2,503

## TOP SIX EMPLOYERS BY HEADCOUNT IN BOONE COUNTY

Delta Connection	
COMAIR .....	4,100
Delta Air Lines, Inc. ....	3,600
Boone County Board of Education .....	2,600
Citi .....	2,500
St. Luke Hospital .....	1,129
Shwan's Food	
Manufacturing, Inc. ....	1,050

Source: Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation



Courtesy Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport has had a great impact on economic growth in Boone County.

# Hub of Region's Growth

Transportation, retail move Boone County into the future

Boone County shines with new developments, expansion of infrastructure to meet the demands of that growth and the promise of its place as the central transportation hub for the region.

Over the past four years, Boone County has added 11 new citizens a day to its population, making it Kentucky's fastest growing county. Many of the new residents come from Hamilton County, Ohio, says Boone County Judge-Executive Gary Moore. "Because of the great economic climate our children can return back home after college, and this also contributes to our growth," he said.

Despite its adjacency to bigger cities, Boone County is a community all its own, and Moore wants people to know it.

"Boone County is not a bedroom community to Cincinnati or Covington. We are the home of the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky International Airport, the Florence Mall, Turfway Park Race Track, and many other industries. We import over 20,000 jobs a day into Boone County," he said.

To say that the location of Greater Cincinnati's metropolitan airport in Boone County has been fortuitous would be a complete understatement.

"Many people reference the hundreds of jobs created by the airport itself which are significant. Delivering a greater impact are the hundreds of companies that have moved here because of the things that the airport brings to our region," Moore said.

Another integral part of Boone County's picture is the tremendous investment and expansion of the retail industry in and around Florence Mall, where mom and pop enterprises thrive alongside national and international retail firms.

Moore sees industrial land as Boone County's economic contribution to the region in the next 10 to 20 years.

"Boone County's industrial areas are near interstates and the airport with the necessary infrastructure and other amenities that make it very attractive for prospective companies looking for a new home. For these reasons Boone County will provide most of the new job creation and additional revenues for both the region and the state," Moore said.

The parks system also will come into its own, Moore said. "We will evolve to a higher level that will meet the needs of additional parks both active and passive, new and improved facilities, and additional programs to our community," he said. ■



# Making a Contribution



Northern Kentucky  
Chamber of Commerce

Leading Businesses.  
Leading Communities."

## Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1969, the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit, volunteer organization of business and professional people dedicated to improving the economic environment of Northern Kentucky. The history of the Chamber of Commerce is a story of cooperation and consensus building.

Recently, the organization launched a new chapter in its history with the unveiling of a new logo (above) and branding system, designed by students at Northern Kentucky University.

According to Chamber President Gary Toebben, "This process has strengthened our image and re-affirmed our commitment to collaboration with the educational community."

Want More Information?

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

At Toyota, being a part of the community is a responsibility we take very seriously. That's why we encourage team members like Helen Carroll, Manager of Community Relations, in their commitment to make a real contribution to our region. Helen does just that as Chair of the Board of the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, which works daily to develop strong businesses and build a vibrant economy in order to provide a better quality of life for all.

Through her leadership of this accomplished, dedicated organization, Helen is indeed making a real contribution to the region we all call home.



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# Campbell County

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## CAMPBELL COUNTY JUDGE-EXECUTIVE

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## CAMPBELL COUNTY POPULATION (2005)

87,465

## TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS

35,176

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2005 (MEDIAN)

\$45,969

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2005 (AVERAGE)

\$56,896

## MEDIAN AGE

35.2

## CAMPBELL COUNTY'S THREE LARGEST CITIES

(2005 Population)

Ft. Thomas .....	16,015
Newport.....	15,730
Cold Spring .....	3,834

## TOP SIX EMPLOYERS BY HEADCOUNT IN CAMPBELL COUNTY

Northern Kentucky University .....	1,896
St. Luke Hospital .....	800
Castellini Group of Companies .....	495
Northern Kentucky Care & Rehab.....	330
General Cable .....	300
Disabled American Veterans .....	240

Source: Northern Kentucky Tri-County  
Economic Development Corporation



Courtesy Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau

Newport on the Levee shines day and night as a popular Northern Kentucky tourist destination.

# On the Forefront

Campbell County offers strong development, quality of life

Campbell County, led by the region's cerebral epicenter at Northern Kentucky University and a progressive leadership team within the city of Newport, is on the forefront of development in the region.

"In Campbell County (and Northern Kentucky) we have the big-city advantages of access to major league sports, the arts and entertainment with Cincinnati nearby, but we ourselves are organized into small towns, with good schools, close-knit neighborhoods and a high quality of life," said Campbell County Judge-Executive Steve Pendery.

NKU enjoyed the recent national spotlight when President George W. Bush visited the campus to tout its new College of Informatics, one of several initiatives now underway. The university also will be playing an even more important economic role in years to come as a new commercial development at the western edge of the campus is complete.

"The area in and around NKU will come into its own in the next 10 years. The university, historically massively under funded compared to its peers around the state, is finally attracting attention (and finance for projects) from a legislature impressed with

its devotion to economic development," Pendery said. "NKU will take a position beside the airport as the two growth engines in our region" in the next 10 to 20 years.

A forward-looking administration in the city of Newport has reinvented the old river city as the premier tourist destination for the metro market. Visitors from across the country are making the trek to the Newport Aquarium and stopping to visit the many shops and restaurants along the city's new core entertainment district surrounding Newport on the Levee.

"Newport on the Levee served notice to the region, that Newport, and by extension, Northern Kentucky, understands what is necessary and gets the economic development job done. There is a surge in growth along our riverfront adding hundreds of millions of dollars to the tax base, and to the wealth of the community," Pendery said.

South of the city, the completion a few years ago of the AA Highway – the Ashland to Alexandria connector – has opened the way for an abundance of land that already is being developed for new homes and commercial enterprises, and it promises to be the next big boom region for housing development in Northern Kentucky. ■





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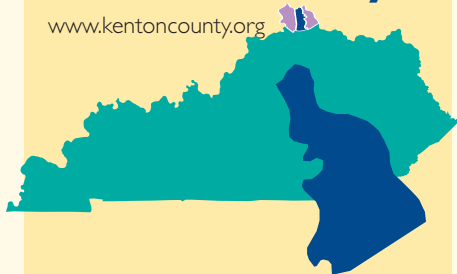
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## Kenton County

www.kentoncounty.org



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### KENTON COUNTY POPULATION 2005

152,915

### TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS

60,928

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2005 (MEDIAN)

\$48,302

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2005 (AVERAGE)

\$61,301

### MEDIAN AGE 2005

34.3

### KENTON COUNTY'S THREE LARGEST CITIES

(2005 Population)

Covington.....	41,211
Erlanger.....	17,630
Independence .....	16,971

### TOP SIX EMPLOYERS BY HEADCOUNT IN KENTON COUNTY

St. Elizabeth Medical Center .....	4,206
Fidelity Investments .....	3,627
Kenton County Board of Education.....	1,689
Toyota Engineering and Manufacturing, NA.....	755
AC Nielsen Corp .....	525
RA Jones.....	410

Source: Northern Kentucky Tri-County  
Economic Development Corporation



The Crestview Hills Town Center features upscale shopping from more than 70 merchants in a unique "lifestyle center" environment.

## Gateway to the Bluegrass

Kenton County benefits from position and proximity to Ohio River

Kenton County is at the heart of Northern Kentucky's ascendancy. Northern Kentucky's most densely populated center, named for Kentucky pioneer Simon Kenton, has benefited the most of the three northern counties with its proximity and connection to downtown Cincinnati and the Ohio River.

The 162-square-mile county has a growing population of 152,915 and is bordered on the North by the Ohio River and on the East by the Licking River.

Dominated on its northern end by Covington, in its center by mature suburban communities and on its southern reaches by what is left of the county's farmland now being converted to new suburban cul de sacs, Kenton County is in many respects a mirror-like reflection of the growth that has occurred over the years across the river in Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Kenton County's strategic position on Interstate 75 makes it a transportation and industrial center. Its biggest city, Covington, is a major rail hub, with massive rail yards as testament to its critical role in transporting goods north and south.

The construction boom along the river in Covington, where the new Northern Kentucky Convention Center, Corporex towers and other high-rise structures are

going up, is redefining its skyline piece-by-piece.

Kenton County also is attracting its share of the region's new housing development, with a median household income of \$48,302 and a cost of living index that is approximately 11 percent lower than the national average.

Kenton County provides the region's most important health care system at the campuses of St. Elizabeth Medical Center, upscale shopping at the recently redesigned "lifestyle" center in Crestview Hills, a vast selection of new and existing housing options, excellent local schools and a community that embraces its small-town feel in a region of two million people and growing.

"In the last two years, we have seen remarkable economic growth and development in Northern Kentucky," said Ralph Drees, Kenton County Judge Executive and Board Chairman for Northern Kentucky Tri-ED. "Groups from the state and county levels, local municipalities, Tri-ED staff, corporate site selectors and real estate developers have all collaborated extremely well to create a positive, energetic business environment in this region. And that spirit of cooperation will continue to create opportunity for us in the months and years ahead." ■



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# Stepping Up Now

Next generation prepares to lead region into the future

If there is a single quotient for the burgeoning growth of Northern Kentucky, it is the detailed, coordinated planning in all aspects of life and commerce that business and civic leaders have been engaged in for more than a quarter century.

But anticipating a rapid-fire transformation brought on by globalization and the digital age, the next generation of leadership has launched Vision 2015, the region's most aggressive planning initiative yet.

Vision 2015, a yearlong labor involving more than 2,000 of Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati's best and brightest minds, is a comprehensive plan with measurable objectives that will continue to propel the region forward as one of the state's most important economic sectors.

The scope of the initiative is as broad as the project is ambitious. It calls for reinventing the economy and creating new jobs; bolstering educational opportunities for a workforce engaged in a knowledge-based economy; continued progressive growth in housing and community development; a concentrated effort at reinvigorating the region's urban sector; coordination with government at all lev-

els to sustain growth; and fostering the sense of collaboration on both sides of the river that has marked the success of Northern Kentucky.

Action teams formed to address core issues in the initiative scoured the region, seeking input from neighborhood groups, community leaders, government officials, academics, and a broad range of industry



Northern Kentucky  
**Vision 2015**  
Shaping Our Future

[www.vision2015.org](http://www.vision2015.org)

and civic captains in Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati.

One of the strategies adopted by the Vision 2015 leadership was the intrinsic inclusion of the next generation of leaders, including Vision 2015 co-chair A.J. Schaeffer, a partner at Greenebaum Doll & McDonald and a 1999 graduate of the University of Kentucky Law School.

"What makes Vision 2015 unique com-

pared to other efforts is not just the passive involvement of the next generation, but instead putting the next generation of leaders in leadership roles now," said Schaeffer's co-chair, Northern Kentucky University President James Votruba.

The findings and the group's vision for the community in the coming decade are dramatic. Vision 2015 seeks, through intensive collaboration, to create 50,000 new jobs for the region in targeted industry clusters that are high-tech, globally oriented and can build on an already booming economy. It also spells out how the region can continue to attract the highly educated workforce needed to fill those jobs, through education and quality-of-life factors that run the gamut from affordable housing to an invigorated urban sector where entertainment, sports and museums add to Northern Kentucky's appeal. And it seeks to work toward a unified voice in government that will resonate ever more poignantly in Frankfort and Washington.

The Vision 2015 report "paints a picture of the future we hope to attain," said Schaeffer. "It's a bright picture where all are invited to participate and none are left behind. A picture where each of our (Northern Kentucky) counties are aligned around a collaborative, shared vision; where cooperation reigns across the Tri-State, and the Ohio River is viewed as a connector rather than a divider." ■



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EDE MAY/09

# Rich Tradition of Support

Region has many positive factors for entrepreneurs

One of Northern Kentucky's great entrepreneurial success stories unfolded because of the region's central location and easy access to the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport.

"I arrived here with an entrepreneurial company that was expanding," said Roger Griggs, now founder and chairman of Florence-based PediaMed and managing director of Union Springs LLC.

A board member of the Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation, Griggs noted that the region's rich tradition of supporting and celebrating entrepreneurs has been part and parcel to his success over the past 15 years.

"We have what you might consider that Midwestern work ethic that prevails," he said. "People are hard working and well trained. And I believe there are a number of

models out there for entrepreneurs to use in their own endeavors."

He also noted that the region is rich with investors willing to work with entrepreneurs.

Griggs said that many of the business-oriented initiatives at Northern Kentucky University also have helped the region gain national acclaim as a hotbed for new business start-ups.

"I think Rebecca White's work at NKU's entrepreneurial institute is just tremendous," Griggs said.

Meanwhile, Griggs also has begun offering advice to other up-and-coming business captains in the area.

"Yes, I would have to say that, from time to time, I do have people asking me for my input on a few things," he said.

"I've been very lucky with all the support and friendship I've had, and I am happy to provide that same kind of support whenever I can. I think that's something you find a lot in Northern Kentucky." ■



**Roger Griggs, one of Northern Kentucky's leading entrepreneurs**

## Northern Kentucky Chosen for National Entrepreneurship Conference

Northern Kentucky will showcase its entrepreneurial strengths when it hosts a national conference on entrepreneurship that will feature business, government and education leaders as speakers.

The Northern Kentucky University Metropolitan and Education Training Center is the site of the 10th Annual National Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers (NCEC) conference, set for Oct. 13-14, 2006.

The NKU Entrepreneurship Institute, University of Dayton and University of Cincinnati are the hosts. The three schools were chosen based on the strength of their entrepreneurship programs and their ability to secure a state-of-the-art venue.

"This is truly a great opportunity to showcase what Northern Kentucky University and the greater Cincinnati area have to offer," said Rebecca White, Director and Founder of the NKU Entrepreneurship Institute.



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**Lakemont, developed by Drees Homes and located near Doe Run Lake in Kenton County, is one of the many trendy communities springing up in Northern Kentucky.**

## Homes in High Demand

New development, good prices make region a great place to live

A n unmistakable catalyst for growth in Northern Kentucky, operating in tandem with a visionary approach to development, has been a tremendous boon in home construction and creation of upscale neighborhoods. The new construction joins the many trendy neighborhoods in Kenton and Campbell counties, where Ft. Thomas and Ft. Mitchell addresses are included among the finest properties in the entire Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky region. A resurgence in upscale townhouse construction — especially in Covington near the historic Roebling Suspension Bridge — offers spectacular views of the river below and Cincinnati's skyline across the way.

In recent years, Boone County has been at the center of new home construction for the region, where proximity to the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, reasonably priced land and taxes, and access to interstate highways and good schools has created some of the fastest growing housing markets in the nation.

Northern Kentucky has led the way for the metropolitan area — on both sides of the Ohio River — when it comes to home construction. In 2003, activity from new home building projects poured nearly \$180 million of new income into the region, adding more than \$15 million in additional

taxes and creating hundreds of new jobs from projects in Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties. That year, more than 2,000 single family permits were issued in the region, an upward trend that has continued into the current fiscal year.

Boone and Campbell counties, in particular, have been gradually transformed over recent years from miles and miles of rolling pastoral landscape to some of the most beautiful neighborhoods one can find anywhere, creating cherished memories for hundreds of families in Alexandria, Florence, Burlington, Hebron and Union. Southern portions of Kenton County, especially around Independence, also have seen a great deal of construction activity as well.

"You have the combination of lots of land that can be developed that is priced well, with access to everything that people want," said Dan Dressman, executive vice president of the Home Builders Association of Northern Kentucky. "A lot of what has fueled this is that people want to live near where they work, and many of these folks work at or near the airport."

The result is a blossoming of new communities in Hebron and Burlington by the top builders in the region, including Drees, Fischer Homes, Arlinghaus Builders, Smith Builders and numerous others. Take a drive through those communities, and you'll discover developments such as Drees'

Thornewilde developments, with homes starting at \$200,000 and going up to \$330,000. Grandview at Parlor Grove, Fischer Homes' development near Hebron with gorgeous Ohio River views and wooded lots, or Plantation Point in Burlington also provide clues to the high demand for Northern Kentucky homes.

"There are many factors involved in the success here," said Bob Schroder, a marketing spokesman for Arlinghaus Builders. "Taxes are reasonable, and that is important for homeowners. The schools are good. And around this area, Burlington and Hebron, there is a lot of positive development, such as new park systems and recreation opportunities that spell out reasons for people wanting to have a Boone County address. Burlington is the hottest area for Arlinghaus right now."

"Independence is really doing well" as a new home mecca, said John Arlinghaus, sales manager for Arlinghaus Builder's Glenhurst development in Independence. "Our Williams Woods subdivision is really booming, and I think once people discover the beauty of this part of the county and the prices of our homes — in the \$150,000 starting range — Glenhurst will take off."

But an address near the airport isn't necessarily the only ticket in the county. Further south, between Union and Richwood, plenty of families have secured new homesteads on land that once played host to horse farms and splendid pasture.

"A lot of buyers are seeking the Triple Crown-type experience," said Susan Huff, manager of Huff Realty's Florence office. With easy access to Interstate 75 and a short drive to the airport, the luxury homes near Union are just what many homeowners seek, Huff said. There is still the feel of the country there, where in just a couple minutes you can be driving the back country of the Bluegrass State. And yet, access to the best the metropolitan region has to offer also is only a short drive away.

Waiting in the wings for new home construction, and probably the next big player in coming years will be the southern stretches of Campbell County, which for the past couple years has had to hold back new home construction because of moratorium placed by the state because of sanitation system problems. With fixes soon to be in place, major builders are looking at Campbell County now, as well.

"We think Campbell County will be a great place to live," said Ann Mitchell, of Drees Homes. ■



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