



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

Jim Gray
Mayor

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Blue Grass Stockyards breaks ground on new home in Lexington

Seven months after a three-alarm fire destroyed the historic home of Blue Grass Stockyards, representatives of the company, the cattle industry and the state joined Mayor Jim Gray to break ground on a new facility.

“We’re investing in our farmers and in our agricultural industry,” Gray said. “This is a \$600 million a year business ... the biggest cattle market group east of the Mississippi River. Blue Grass Stockyards is to cattle what Keeneland is to Thoroughbreds. It has been part of our community for 70 years and we’re proud it’s staying in Lexington.”

Jim Akers, Stockyards Chief Operating Officer, said, “The entire Blue Grass family is excited that the day has finally come that we can begin our recovery and start down the path of getting this important and historic business operational.”

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The new tech savvy facility will be located on Iron Works Pike, adjacent to the I-75 interchange. It's designed for easy access for farmers, and the sales process has been streamlined, Akers said. A new education center will teach students about the cattle industry. Environmental controls will be in place to protect groundwater.

Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles said Blue Grass Stockyards is a vital part of the economy for Fayette and surrounding counties. "But it's also a treasure of Kentucky's agricultural heritage," Quarles said. "The new facility will carry on that heritage while providing Kentucky producers a conveniently located, state-of-the-art facility." Quarles was represented at the news conference by Keith Rogers, Chief of staff at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

The new facility was also welcomed by representatives of the cattle industry. "Today will be marked as a historic date in the history books for Kentucky agriculture," said Dave Maples, Executive Director of the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association. "It will be marked as a day that a group of businessmen and a community worked together to put a plan in place to not only replace the old market, but to build the foundation for a new vibrant industry."

Last year, approximately 106,000 animals were sold at the Lexington market, plus another 50,000 sold on-line out of the Stockyards offices in Lexington. Farmers were paid approximately \$200 million for that livestock. Altogether, at its seven locations in Kentucky and through on-line sales, the market sells about \$600 million in cattle each year. The Stockyards was previously located off Forbes Road, near Leestown.

"Commerce Lexington Inc. is proud of our partnership with the Blue Grass Stockyards," said Bob Quick, CCE, President & CEO, Commerce Lexington Inc. "The Stockyards symbolize the vibrancy of Central Kentucky's cattle industry and set a standard for national pricing and efficiency. We were thrilled to be a part of the company's ground-breaking on their new site."