

FULL STRIDE INITIATIVE

commerce
lexington
Economic
Development

Investor Update

April 1 – June 30, 2021

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Commerce Lexington Inc. Named to Site Selection Magazine's list of Top Economic Development Agencies

For the third time in the last four years, Commerce Lexington Inc. is among the top economic development agencies in the nation, according to Site Selection magazine's May issue. Organizations named to the list are presented with the Mac Conway Award for Excellence in Economic Development, which recognizes national/regional economic development offices that were the most successful attracting capital investment projects in 2020. Named in honor of Site Selection founding publisher H. McKinley "Mac" Conway, this year's award winners have been evaluated by an index that examines 2020 corporate facility investment as tracked by Site Selection's proprietary Conway Projects database.

Scores are awarded based on six criteria: total projects, total investment associated with those projects and jobs associated with those projects. The remaining three criteria represent a per capita calculation of those same metrics. "There's no doubt that 2020 was one of the most difficult years on record for business and industry, but despite the barriers, Kentucky economic development professionals adapted quickly to a new way of recruiting companies. Gina Greathouse and her economic development team at Commerce Lexington, as well as many volunteers across our community, continued to reach out to companies and consultants locally and nationally to provide assistance and resources

to better position them for growth and expansion. It took a strong team effort over the last year to maintain some of the momentum from the previous few years," said Bob Quick, Commerce Lexington Inc. president and CEO.



Commerce Lexington Inc. Helps Create Awareness on Background Checks for Employers

On May 26th, Commerce Lexington Inc. hosted a webinar entitled, "You Don't Know What You Don't Know, Background Checks," in partnership with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to familiarize employers in the Bluegrass Region with available options for employee background checks. During the session, participants learned about the benefits of using AOC's "pre-paid" and "pay-as-you-go" FastCheck services, how to register, testimonials from clients and more. To access a link to the recorded webinar, please visit commercelexington.com or check out the Commerce Lexington Inc. YouTube Channel at [youtube.com/commlexingtonky](https://www.youtube.com/commlexingtonky).

Background Check Process



REQUEST SUBMITTED ONLINE 24/7



REQUEST PROCESSED, RESULTS REVIEWED,
REPORT GENERATED



FASTCHECK REQUEST RESULTS ARE
DELIVERED ONLINE WITHIN 24-48 HOURS.
ONE-TIME REQUEST RESULTS ARE PROCESSED
AND MAILED WITHIN 24-48 HOURS.

By the Numbers

- 10** NEW PROSPECTS
INTERESTED IN FINDING
A NEW LOCATION
OR EXPANDING
OPERATIONS
- 2** COMPANIES WITH
POTENTIAL EXPANSIONS
IN LEXINGTON
- 15** EXISTING
BUSINESS VISITS
- 1** CLIENT VISIT

EVENTS, CONFERENCES, AND NETWORKING

Bluegrass Alliance Meets to Discuss Regional Initiatives

In May and June the Bluegrass Alliance met in Bourbon and Clark Counties to continue conversations surrounding economic development from a regional perspective. Commerce Lexington shared details about our upcoming Regional Summit and invited feedback from our partners. The Bluegrass Alliance is dedicated to collaborating ideas and endeavors that impact the quality of life in Central Kentucky. One of our main goals is to create jobs for all Kentuckians specific to the region we serve.



Kentucky Association for Economic Development (KAED) presents Strategic Planning Summit

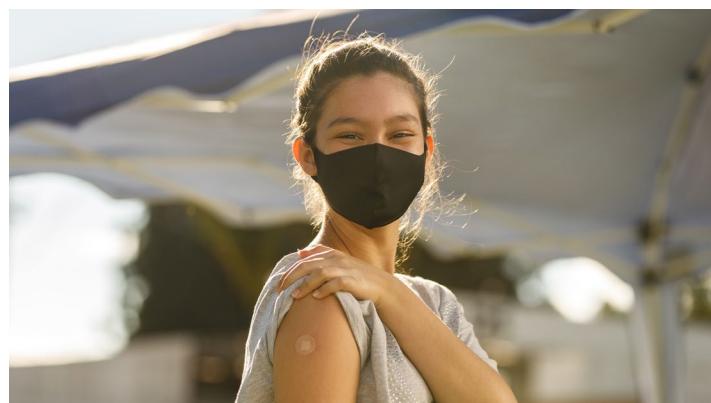
On May 18, Commerce Lexington Inc. attended the KAED Strategic Planning Summit to learn about the strategic planning process for our organization, presenting our strategic plan, how to evaluate a strategic plan using pro tips and more. The second half of the day focused on Economic Development Organization Management. During this session, our team learned about foundational Human Resources Practices from Beverly Clemons at CMI Consulting and professional EDO perspectives from Jodi Lassiter at Develop Danville and Kim Huston at Nelson County Economic Development Authority.



Jody Lassiter, President and CEO of Develop Danville, presents to KAED members during the Strategic Planning Summit.

Commerce Lexington Inc. supports LFUCG Mobile Vaccine Unit Initiatives

In response to a growing concern that employees are unable to secure vaccine appointments due to schedule conflicts, and to provide an opportunity for employees to conveniently receive a vaccine, Commerce Lexington Inc. has partnered with the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government to seek employers interested in securing a mobile vaccine unit to administer the Covid-19 vaccine on-site to its employees. If you or someone you know is interested to learn more about the Mobile Vaccine Unit, please contact Gina Greathouse at ggreathouse@commercelexington.com.



KAED brings together Kentucky's Economic Development professionals for a statewide Collaboration

On May 19-21, Commerce Lexington Inc. attended Kentucky Association for Economic Development's Collaboration Conference presented by Murray State University. The Collaboration Conference is Kentucky's signature spring economic development event, at which we joined the Commonwealth's economic developers, business leaders, and policy makers to discuss Kentucky's economic strategies, opportunities, and advantages. Commerce Lexington Inc. is a proud member of KAED and looks forward to future opportunities to network and learn best practices specific to economic development in the Bluegrass Region and Kentucky.



EVENTS, CONFERENCES, AND NETWORKING

Manufacturers' Network Group In-Person Event Coming Soon

Pre-pandemic, Commerce Lexington Inc. organized and hosted quarterly networking events specific to the Bluegrass region's target industries, including Biotech, Headquarters, Call Centers, Manufacturers, and Tech Leaders. These events aimed to unite various employers within each sector for an opportunity to share best practices, industry standards, opportunities, and challenges. We are excited to announce that our team is in process of organizing our first post-COVID Manufacturers' Networking Group in-person event, slated for early September where manufacturers can come together and share stories about their unique implementations, challenges

and opportunities. Our economic development team serves as a liaison and resource between Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government and the Lexington business community. It is a priority for our team to better understand the unique needs of the business community, so we can best assist companies to grow their local workforce and to provide guidance and resources for growth and expansion. If you or someone you know is interested in attending this event, contact Cheryl Klever at cklever@commercelexington.com. Watch for more details soon.



Manufacturers tour Link-Belt Cranes' headquarters and manufacturing facility in June of 2019.

HERE'S OUR PROOF:

Lexington was recently ranked
#5 Best Run City in America
by WalletHub



BUSINESS AND EDUCATION NETWORK

Commerce Lexington participates in new Collaborative Series with Asheville & Chattanooga

As cities and regions across the nation continue to grapple with the pandemic, while continuing to provide services for their citizens and preparing for post-COVID challenges, a lot of lessons can be learned from other communities. Leaders from Lexington recently participated in the *Cities Collaborate Series*, a virtual event with leaders from Asheville, North Carolina and Chattanooga, Tennessee to share best practices around tourism, workforce development, and digital equity.

In the first session titled *Tourism: Starting Back*, **Mary Quinn Ramer**, President of VisitLEX, joined Victoria Isley, President & CEO of Explore Asheville and Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, and Barry White, President & CEO of the Chattanooga CVB to discuss marketing and strategic thinking for communities now that visitation numbers are climbing again.

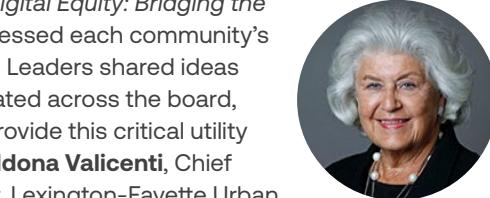


The next session titled *Workforce Development: Innovative Methods for Growing the Talent Pipeline in an Equitable Manner*, addressed the critical need for talent in each community. Leaders shared what they are doing to grow and expand the workforce. **Daryl Smith**, Project Manager for Economic

Development & Key Accounts at LG&E and KU Energy, represented Lexington alongside April Brown, Director of Industry Recruitment & Expansion in Asheville and Molly Blankenship, Vice President of Talent Initiatives at the Chattanooga Area Chamber & Executive Director of Chattanooga 2.0.

The last session, *Digital Equity: Bridging the Digital Divide*, addressed each community's unique challenges. Leaders shared ideas that can be duplicated across the board, as we all seek to provide this critical utility to our residents. **Aldona Valicenti**, Chief Information Officer, Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government presented along with Deb Socia, President & CEO, The Enterprise Center of Chattanooga and Hunter Goosmann, Executive Director of the Education & Research Consortium of the Western Carolinas.

For more information, or to access videos from each session, please reach out to Betsy Dexter at bdexter@commercelexington.com.



New Superintendent hired for Fayette County Public Schools

In June, the Fayette County Board of Education unanimously moved to appoint **Dr. Demetrus Liggins** to be the next superintendent of Fayette County Public Schools.



Dr. Liggins most recently served as superintendent of schools in Greenville Independent School District (ISD), an urban district outside of Dallas, Texas. Upon his arrival in 2016, the district had a "D" rating and was facing fiscal challenges. Since then, the district earned high ratings in academic and fiscal performance. The Texas Education Agency gave Greenville ISD a "B" overall, and a "Superior" rating for financial management.

Bilingual in English and Spanish, he initiated a citywide literacy program called Rally Round Reading, which offers all children ages birth to third grade high-quality online reading materials in both English and Spanish. He served on the Texas Association of School Administrators' Race, Equity, and Diversity committee.

Dr. Liggins values preparing students for both college and careers and created a partnership with Texas A&M University-Commerce guaranteeing admission of all Greenville ISD graduates and free tuition for economically disadvantaged students. In 2020, he was recognized as a "Superintendent to Watch" by the National School Public Relations Association.

He received his bachelor's in education and master's degree in English from California State University, Fresno and a Master of Education and superintendent certification from Stephen F. Austin State University. He received his Ph.D. in K-16 educational leadership and policy from University of Texas-Arlington.

Dr. Liggins will serve in the position previously held by Superintendent Manny Caulk, who passed away unexpectedly in December 2020. Caulk cared deeply about students and made positive impacts on teaching and learning in the district. Dr. Marlene Helm has served as interim superintendent since November.

"We were energized by the community engagement in this process. Overwhelmingly, we heard our community wanted someone who not only can connect with students, staff, and community partners, but also understands the value brought by these diverse perspectives," said Board Chair Tyler Murphy.

Dr. Liggins officially began July 26th.

COMMUNITY AND MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Investment Board Approves Bond Application for Distillery District Development

Commerce Lexington Inc.'s Sr. VP of Community & Minority Business Development, Tyrone Tyra, serves on the Mayor's Economic Investment Board. In June, the board approved an Industrial Revenue Bond ("IRB") Application for Astana, LLC., the first private IRB application to be before the Board in recent memory. The proposal is for the development of a 120-124 room hotel at the eastern end of the Distillery District and will also include a rooftop restaurant and bar, event space (11,000+ sq. ft.), a spa, and a microbrewery. The approximate project cost is \$37.4 million. Also included is a request for LFUCG to issue up to \$39 million in tax abatement IRBs to fill a gap in the project's capital stack.

Minority and Community Business Development Snapshot

The Accelerator Program

Commerce Lexington Inc. has worked with several companies consistently over the past few years that have experienced considerable growth. The majority of these companies have steadily improved their revenue. We take a micro approach and develop a micro-business development person/s for each business. Our long-term goal is to launch 20 companies with business development officers. A survey of minority businesses is in the works to determine what can be added to the program to give MBE's more opportunities for success.

Training Programs

A committee has been formed to re-establish our Minority & Women's Contractor Training Program. The committee is currently recruiting sponsors for the program so a productive pilot program can be launched. If enough monetary sponsorships are received, the pilot program will move forward with the Kentucky Procurement Technical Assistance Center (KYPTAC) starting in January. This time frame allows us to recruit more sponsors, develop the program criteria and promote the program to eligible minority and women construction companies. The sponsorship goal for launch is \$25,000. As of the end of July, \$8,000 has been committed.

Grant Signings

Community & Minority Business Development has conducted four grant signings during June for the LFUCG Small Business Economic Recovery Program for a total of \$2,257,843. The Urban County Council also unanimously approved a second \$2.5 million to assist small businesses in Lexington.

By the Numbers

LEXINGTON SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM

\$2,257,843

TOTAL FUNDING FOR ALL RECIPIENTS

155

NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS

58%

FEMALE OR MINORITY OWNED

Commerce Lexington INC. collaborates with Black Faith Leaders to create opportunities for Minority Businesses

Black Faith Leaders of Lexington and Vicinity is a collaboration of clergy across denominational and gender lines working to address social injustice and systemic racism in Lexington and surrounding communities.

Commerce Lexington Inc. staff participates in a bi-monthly meeting with the Black Faith Leaders collaborative to address challenges and opportunities in the minority business community. In attendance at the last meeting were several members of the procurement community along with local community leaders. The primary objective of these meetings is to find ways to increase procurement opportunities for minority businesses. The group is in the process of developing a pledge designed to create opportunities and encourage commitment from large corporations and entities to do business with minority-owned companies. Agencies such as Greater Louisville Inc (GLI) and the Metro Chambers in Indianapolis and Columbus have been successful with similar initiatives.

Commerce Lexington's *Racial Equity Pledge* challenges the region's business community to build a more inclusive economy based on equal opportunity and advancing racial equity. To view the pledge visit locateinlexington.com/minority-business-services.