



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

Jim Gray
Mayor

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New Blue Grass Stockyards opens

A 70-year Lexington tradition, interrupted by a devastating fire in January 2016, will be back in business next week, as sales begin at the new Blue Grass Stockyards in Fayette County. Mayor Jim Gray, Councilmembers and members of the Blue Grass Stockyards family cut a ribbon to officially open the new facility today.

“This is a proud day in our city,” Mayor Jim Gray said. “This \$600-million-a-year business, with deep roots in our agricultural economy, is back, and will be open for business on Monday in a facility that sets new standards for the industry.”

Jim Akers, Stockyards Chief Operating Officer, said, “It has been a dream of Gene Barber’s for 20 years to have a one-stop shop for our customers. It is designed around the ease of our customers.”

Gene Barber and his brother, Larry, are second generation owners of Blue Grass Stockyards along with seven other partners, Eric Barber, Scott Bucher, Austin Paul, David Holt, Jim Dause, Brian Horn and Johnny Lakes.

“I’m so proud of the members of our Blue Grass organization, who have come together to build this facility, and I am thankful to our loyal customers,” Barber said. The ground-breaking for the facility was just over a year ago.

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Terry Gill, Secretary of the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, said, “Blue Grass Stockyards is a pillar in the state's agricultural industry, and a major contributor to the Central Kentucky economy. Following the devastating fire, it is a triumph to see this new location open and operational. I look forward to the company's success long into the future.”

The 232,000-square-foot facility, located off I-75 near the Kentucky Horse Park includes 40,000 square feet of office and retail space. There’s a Regional Marketplace at the Stockyards featuring over 20 businesses, including Bromagen Commodities, a broker; the Chop Shop, a local meat market; a restaurant, clothing store and all kinds of services cattle farmers need. And there’s an exhibit space for everything from farm equipment to nutrition software.

The 192,000-square-foot barn is state-of-the-art. “We’ve put an emphasis on minimal stress for the cattle, and humane handling. It is also designed to be efficient and easy for farmers to get in and unload their cattle,” Akers said.

Mayor Gray said the business is very important to Lexington. “Blue Grass Stockyards is to cattle what Keeneland is to Thoroughbreds,” Gray said. “It is the biggest cattle market group east of the Mississippi River. Because of its sales volume, it effectively sets the cattle price structure for the entire Eastern United States.”

In 2015, 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.

“Commerce Lexington is proud to participate in the grand opening event for the new Blue Grass Stockyards facility,” said Carla Blanton, Commerce Lexington Inc. Board Chair. “The Blue Grass Stockyards, and the creation of the Regional Marketplace, is a true attribute for our city. Congratulations to the Stockyards on your new home.”