

Editorial & Opinions ENOUGH

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"Because you have stood with us in the past; we commit to never allow pressures to stop us from standing for you today," Jeff Jobe, 2010



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My dream for SCKY; realizing our value

By **JEFF JOBE**
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Without a doubt 2019 has been a year of effort. We have seen a tremendous amount of effort expended from all levels of government; city, county, state and national leaders wanting to help spur some much needed economic development growth.

If you have lived long enough you will more than likely recognize that good or bad, national and state trends make their way to us but it just takes a little time.

This came true when the national markets were suffering and we are beginning to see it with growth as well. Knowledgeable business developers know this and they are in full swing reaching into new areas of possibilities for their interests. All of us need to embrace it and step out together to take full advantage of a growth trending market.

All levels of government are so very important and desperately needed in order to facilitate growth and we are seeing mayors, economic developers and county leaders working closely with state officials looking for ways to make dreams become a reality.

Entrepreneurship is the key to our community success and we are beginning to see hints of growth and it is encouraging. We have so much uniqueness in the heart of our town sitting right on Main Street that hold the key to our best first impression possible.

In my 22-years of covering local news, I have seen few downtown revitalization initiatives and even less follow through in regards to encouraging a unified facelift or real estate rehabilitation. Yet, I have seen millions spent on land, vacant lots or community projects at the edge of town or in building new government offices during this same time. These investments are certainly good for our community but until the downtown is active with life we are missing our true potential for making a first impression needed to attract and maintain real community growth.

Google indicates that small town life and vacation destinations increased by 28% in 2019 and the trend is growing exponentially. Large out-of-state real estate companies are cross marketing rural communities as build your own market opportunities. Our central United States location is perfect for not only entrepreneurial but proven dot-com businesses and we need to lay the ground work to make it attractive for these investors.

I believe the time is here for us all to take a look at the buildings and land in the heart of our community and offer incentives to encourage property owners to upgrade them and others to utilize them. We need second floor apartments, Airbnb's, condominiums and penthouse styled living and first floor small business incubators.

Each should be geared toward the uniqueness in our town. Whether it is caves, lakes, hunting, rivers, locks and dams, farm life or other attractions like community theatre, breweries, outdoor life and museums we can reinvent our destiny by embracing what we have taken for granted.

Public/private partnerships are an amazing avenue to help bridge this need for community rehabilitation. Just imagine what could be accomplished if each of our communities matched 50% of store front revitalization up to a fixed amount payable when a building has been upgraded to offer code approved rentals. These same rentals could be given tax incentives for small downtown startup shops, restaurants or pubs geared to bringing life back to downtown.

Incentives are a positive ways to partner with real estate owners and one I believe would work but there also needs to be a recognizable amount of tough love. There is no acceptable reason that any of our public squares should have boarded up windows, or safety hazards that come from buildings not protected from the elements. I'm comfortable that each of our towns have ordinances already on the books and all that is needed is elected officials willing to place individuals in governing positions willing to do their jobs and assure compliance. Again, identifying the specific issue and offering a one-time incentive would benefit us all and probably go a long way in balancing the political fall-out sure to come from pushing these appointed boards to do their job.

These partnerships are essential and I'm hopeful we can take the lessons realized from ignoring who we are from the past, the hard work and efforts expenses in 2019 and carry them into 2020 with confidence in realizing our value.

We are a community of wonderful people with a history worth honoring and a future worth a tax dollars investment match.

Jeff Jobe is founder and CEO of Jobe Publishing, Inc. His commentary reflects his personal views and does not reflect the views of personal or professional associations and affiliations. Reach him at jobe@jobeinc.com. Read his previously published commentary at sckentucky.com

What we should do for the Environment



By **JERRY MATERA**
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Citizen Reporter

With the new year here it's time to make some serious resolutions. One serious resolution and the most benefit you can do for the world is make an effort to do something about the environment. Your children and grandchildren will thank you.

With climate change a reality, and it is according to the people who know, our scientists, there are a few things we can do, and should do, as individuals to slow down the eroding of our environment.

Let's start with travel, since we all do it. As the weather gets cooler, which it will, the tendency is for people to start their cars long before they are ready to get in them and drive. It's amazing to me that creature comfort is so overwhelming that they're willing to spend as much as they do in gasoline just to get in a warm car.

Besides their disregard for the environment (misuse of a non-renewable resource and pollution of the air), they are re-enforcing our dependence on other countries for our energy and helping to increase the price of gas. And, there is no benefit to the engine for letting it run in idle. In fact, it is harmful.

I am sympathetic to people who depend on gasoline as a cost item for their livelihood, independent truck drivers for example. These people are really hurt when gasoline prices rise. The rest of us should think about how we can conserve gas and bring the price down for those who have to use it.

Here are some things you can do:

- Walk when possible.
- Don't speed. The slower you go the more fuel efficient your car becomes.
- Buy local food. Visit the Farmers Market. The average food item has traveled 1500 miles to reach you.
- Make an effort to use less plastic. Plastic is made from oil. Cut back on plastic bottled beverages. Use re-useable bags at the grocery and other stores

Many more practices can make you a friend of the earth and we will discuss them in future columns.

Reduce, Recycle, Reuse.

Letter to the Editor Policy

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