Local leaders learn about economic plan for Central Kentucky to compete as a region

Lt. Gov. Coleman discusses a statewide initiative

By Bob Vlach WOODFORD SUN STAFF

To compete economically against regions across the Lexington, said efforts are ongoing to market properties here. country, Woodford County and eight other Central Kentucky counties are collaborating on a 2025 Regional Competitive-

Bob Quick, president of Commerce Lexington, talked to local leaders about the plan during an Executive Leadership Roundtable meeting on June 13. The quarterly meetings are organized by the Woodford County Economic Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce, with large employers and industry partners invited to participate.

... When we come together," Quick told local leaders, "it gives us more population – meaning more workforce. That's a big deal." He said coming together as a region also means more job sites and a higher quality of life, which he described as "a huge plus for us. And we've got to figure

In order for the Greater Lexington region to become more competitive, a website has been created so a larger number of people who live outside of Kentucky can learn about where they can live, work and play if they move here, Betsy Dexter, a senior vice president at Commerce Lexington,

The website is being enhanced to include an interactive tool so people can learn about counties in this region where they may want to live based on their answers to several

questions, Dexter said

To boost economic development in the nine-county region, Gina Greathouse, an executive vice president at Commerce

Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman also talked about economic development, which she described as "the bones of the house," during her roundtable presentation on a statewide

initiative: Our New Kentucky Home.

"Tourism," she continued, "is the front porch. That's what people see. That's the hook we want to use to get people to come visit – and then think, 'I would like to live here and raise my family (here)."

One of the challenges to making this their New Kentucky Home, Coleman acknowledged, is affordable housing.

'It doesn't matter if I am in the East End of Louisville or Letcher County, the number one issue I hear people talk about is the challenge of affordable housing – and that's a nationwide issue," she said.

The City of Versailles is no different. A modular home on High Street will soon be sold and other locations for these more affordable housing options are being considered, Mayor

'But \$249,000 for 1,700 square feet is not affordable," she acknowledged, for someone making less than \$40,000 a year. Planning Commissioner Whitney Stepp added, "Folks

claim they want affordable housing, but they don't want it in their backyard. They don't want it close to their neigh-



of affordable housing in Kentucky, which she emphasized is a national issue, during an Executive Leadership Roundtable at the Woodford County Library on June 13. She also talked about the importance of having universal pre-kindergarten in Kentucky. "We project prison populations by third grade literacy rates," she said. "... The number one indicator of those third grade literacy rates is kindergarten readiness ... So I like to say, 'We can either invest in pre-K or we can invest in prisons." (Photo by Bob Vlach)

Midway CityCouncil approves encroachment permit for problem Main Street building

By Scott White Managing Editor

The Midway City Council approved an encroachment request at its June 16 meeting from Naser "Nas" Alamdari, the owner of a vacant, neglected building located at 116 E. Main Street in the historic tourism corridor.

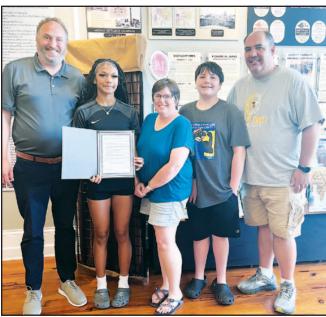
The building has long been described by officials and residents as an eyesore and a threat to public safety . . . and, making it worse for residents, the building is one of the last standing Fraternal Order of Odd Fellows' structures built by and for African-Americans in the 19th century in Kentucky.

As the Sun has regularly reported, several Midway mayors and councils, as well as the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission and its Board of Architecture Review (BOAR) have been frustrated in their efforts over many years to compel Alamdari to resolve the problem via remodeling, rebuilding or some other solution.

Last year, Alamdari began working with experts and architects affiliated with the Kentucky History Commission and presented a proposed plan with architectural drawings to the BOAR, which approved it along with a firm deadline.

Though some work has been completed, Planning Director Steve Hunter said at the last council meeting that there was substantial work yet to be undertaken, much less completed, including the street-facing facade. As a result, the Commission issued three Notices of Violations to Alamdari at its last meeting: two for violations of the Midway Building and Property Maintenance ordinances and one zoning violation.

At the June 16 council meeting, Alamdari requested permission for a 120-day permit to encroach on the sidewalk to construct scaffolding to complete the facade repair/



HANNAH McCOLL WEEK was proclaimed for June 16 21 in Midway to honor the remarkable accomplishments of Hannah in winning six straight Kentucky Middle School championships in track and field. Pictured from left, Mayor Grayson Vandegrift, Hannah, Heather, Jonathan and Mike McColl. (Photo courtesy of City of Midway)

"I had a good conversation with (Alamdari), and I think this is a good first step," Mayor Grayson Vandegrift said. Councilmembers Logan Nance and Ian VanSteenbergh

agreed it was a good first step, but, as Nance said, "I'd like to keep it to 90 days so we can see if progress is being made, and if you need more time, we can grant an extension then." VanSteenbergh also pointed out, "The 90-day is what is

standard for these, and we should keep to this.

Alamdari said the facade will adhere to the plan approved by the BOAR, and hopes to begin work as soon as he lines

up the skilled labor he will need. Vandegrift, after council approved a 90-day permit, told

Alamdari, "If progress is happening, the city will hold on enforcing the three citations." This means the fines would be held in abeyance.

Juneteenth

Councilmember Mary Raglin and Vandegrift reminded the council that the annual Juneteenth celebrations will occur on Saturday, June 21 from noon to 5 p.m., with vendors, music, author readings and other activities. There will be a march starting from City Hall to the Sons and Daughters historic cemetery promptly at 4 p.m. The route will include art pieces created by the Juneteenth committee.

The council approved two donations: \$250 to the Woodford County Track Club, which supports youth track and field teams in the schools; and, \$250 to the Woodford County Schools for Midway's share of the end-of-year "Kids Win

Hannah McColl

Council approved setting the week of June 16 to June 21 as Hannah McColl Week in Midway. The resolution presented to her noted the community's pride in Hannah's many accomplishments as an athlete and student, including winning first place in the 60m and 200m as a six, seventh and eighth grader, becoming the first ever six-time state champion for indoor middle school track in Kentucky history; winning first place in the 100m in all three middle school grades: winning first place in the 200m in the seventh and eighth grades; and being the first ever five-time state champion for outdoor middle school track in Kentucky history.

Part-time grant writer

Vandegrift introduced Edwin Rye as the newly hired part-time grant writer for city government. Rye is a Midway resident with significant experience in grant writing. Vandegrift asked the council to run all ideas or possible grants through him to avoid overwhelming Rye.

Committee votes to seek proposals for comprehensive housing study

By Bob Vlach WOODFORD SUN STAFF

A subcommittee of the Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning Commission agreed to move forward with doing a Comprehensive Housing Study at its June 12 meeting.

The process began with the Comprehensive Plan committee directing Planning Director Steve Hunter to seek request for proposals (RFPs) outlining the scope of services for what is described as a Comprehensive Housing Study that analyzes the current state of housing within the county's urban service

"I think this is really an important thing for the Comp Plan to reflect because of all the development that we're seeing in town, and the need for housing that's affordable for a wide range of incomes," Versailles Mayor Laura Dake

The consultant hired for the study will draft a report that specifically addresses current and future housing needs in the Versailles and Midway urban service areas, according to the scope of services in the RFP. Also included in the services will

Strawberries

Toast'em Pop-Ups

be trends impacting housing needs and demand as well as identifying barriers to addressing the housing needs such as government policies

and housing costs. When finished, the housing study can become a chapter in the updated Comprehensive Plan, Hunter said. He said he'll work on sending out RFPs to prospective consultants, with the goal of having a final traffic study completed at the first of next

A previous housing study for counties across the state shows Woodford County being 1,100 housing units short, but that study does not specify what types of units are needed here, Hunter told committee members. "We don't have that kind of demographic breakdown," he said.

'That's the goal (with this study)," he added, "is to have more detailed information on the targets on income levels and the targets on the types of units.'

Before the meeting ended, Hunter told committee members, "We're going to be in a pause on the Comp Plan for a little while," noting it will take until about August before bids are received on the housing study.



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