



State officials want input on improvement

RACHEL ADAMS, The Daily News, radams@bgddailynews.com

June 20, 2007

Create a rail system between Lexington and Frankfort for commuters. Enact a motorcycle helmet law. Bring more festivals to cities around Kentucky to boost local economies.

These are a handful of more than 100 suggestions submitted to New Agenda for Kentucky, an initiative of the state Chamber of Commerce that encourages Kentuckians to voice their ideas about how to improve the Bluegrass state.

As part off the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce's coffee hour at 7 a.m. Friday at the Sloan Convention Center, representatives from the New Agenda project will show residents how to navigate the New Agenda Web site, discuss the project and accept suggestions from attendees, said Bob Gray, a consultant with Frankfort-based Taylor Gray Associates, which has been working with New Agenda since it began in April.

The Web site is integral to the project, Gray said. Its main feature is to allow residents to submit their ideas, but there's also a section that links to various reports and studies from the U.S. Census Bureau, Frankfort's Legislative Research Committee and other organizations.

"We're hopeful that if people were thinking about an idea, it might give them an opportunity to research it a little bit before they post it," he said.

Later this year, a task force of 23 people from around Kentucky will evaluate each idea, then put together an agenda to present the ideas to Kentucky's next governor at the end of the year. Bowling Green's task force representative is Brian Mefford, president and CEO of **ConnectKentucky**. He was invited to participate by Dave Adkisson, president and CEO of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

"**ConnectKentucky** is engaged with every community, every county across Kentucky, and so as I believe the chamber was looking to bring in folks who have a presence through their companies across the state, it seemed like a good fit," Mefford said. "New Agenda is looking for collaborations across communities and across individuals and the Internet as a communications medium really enables that in a way that we've never seen before. That's the vehicle that makes it easier than ever before for individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status or regardless of what job they have, where they live

– they have the opportunity to participate in this process that ultimately will provide input directly to the governor.”

To encourage submissions, **ConnectKentucky** is planning to give away an iPod for ideas stemming from the Bowling Green/Warren County region, he added.

“I encourage everybody to consider submitting ideas, because that’s the beauty of this project,” Mefford said. “Everybody has ideas that they’ve thought of at some point, that they really want to put on somebody’s radar in Frankfort, and this is a great opportunity to do that. ... The odds are very good that if an idea has merit that it’s going to be given life in some form somewhere.”

Ideas on improving Kentucky may be submitted online at <http://www.newagendaky.com>, by phone at (502) 695-4700 or via mail to New Agenda Project, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, 464 Chenault Road., Frankfort, KY 40601.

#

Copyright 2007 News Publishing LLC (Bowling Green, KY)