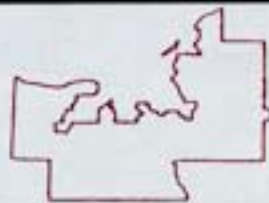


NOCCA NEWS

A newsletter published by the
Northeast Ohio City Council Association, Inc.
Volume 1, Issue 1 January, 2004



Message from the President

Greetings for 2004 and wishes for a healthy and successful New Year to each of you and the communities you represent. As the saying goes, "time flies when you're having so much fun". I must have been having a grand time, or otherwise in a coma, as 2003 whisked by in a flash for me and mine. The past year truly was challenging and very fulfilling as I served my own city, the Girl Scouts, and our renamed N.O.C.C.A., Inc., Northeast Ohio City Council Association, Inc. The neat thing about the new name is the acronym is pronounceable and quite catchy, a fact we hope makes the organization more visible and sought out -- who are they and what do they do?

The Board has identified new issues common to our members for forum programs that should afford us opportunity to speak out as an organization to advocate for beneficial changes for all the communities represented. To accomplish that I lift up three ways by which your participation can help us become influential in the solution seeking process.

Be intentional. Find the time to attend the quarterly forums. The evaluations collected at each give us high marks on the quality of topics and speakers and also indicate a desire that more of our membership were present to share in the learning and exchange of viewpoints. **Mark your calendars now and save the last Thursdays in April, July and October.** We have succeeded most of the time in holding to that schedule in order to institutionalize our format for meeting times.

This year you will only need to drive one of two places for those meetings. The January 29, 2004 dinner and the July forum will be held at the Embassy Suites, Independence. The April and October forums will be held at the City Club. We hope this change will help boost attendance.

Help us recruit cities who have never joined, or who once were members by sharing the value of membership and how the forums can improve their knowledge of government and their council role. Help us boost forum attendance by bringing directors or other pertinent administrative personnel who can also benefit from the speakers' messages.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank and praise the Board members who worked so diligently and skillfully helping to shape and deliver the 2003 forums and forge ahead on our growing mission. Their patience and support of me were truly gifts and sustained me all year. The friendship we share is a bonus and a joy. It is particularly difficult to say "so long" to Jan Devereaux, as she leaves the Board after many years of service. Jan did not seek reelection, having served Shaker Heights Council for twelve years. Although she has already paid her Associate dues and will remain a member for 2004, we will miss her intellect, intuitive sense, and her passion for getting things done, and getting them done well. THANK YOU, Jan!

Thank you to N.O.C.C.A., Inc. members also for your contribution to last year's successes. We look forward to working on your behalf in 2004 and as always, welcome your comments and suggestions. In these continued tense and frustrating times, times of threat and economic shifts, times that make hopefulness difficult, it is imperative that we reinforce what binds us and diminish what separates us as we keep our focus on the good that lies ahead. May the New Year bring you renewed energy, passion and purpose as we govern together.

Kathryn E. Gambalose
President, N.O.C.C.A., Inc.

PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL FORUM

**THURSDAY,
January 29, 2004
Embassy Suites
Cleveland - Rockside
25800 Rockside Woods Blvd.
Independence**

**"Iceberg Ahead for
Cuyahoga County: Need for
a Paradigm Shift? Moving
from Development to
Redevelopment."**

GUEST SPEAKERS:

DR. TOM BIER, Executive in
Residence, Center for Housing
Research and Policy, Levin College
of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State
University

MR. CHRIS RONAYNE,
Cleveland City Planning Director

Registration, Meet & Greet and Cash Bar	6:00 pm
Welcome, Meeting and Election of Officers	6:45 pm
Dinner*	7:00 pm
Program, followed by Q & A's	8:00 pm

Dinner is FREE OF CHARGE for paid members; member guests are \$30 each. Non-members and non-member guests are \$40 each. Individuals unable to attend who fail to give a 24-hour notice of cancellation will be billed for dinner(s).

REGISTRATION

Please make your reservations by
Mon., January 26, 2004 to Cheryl McNulty
at 216-382-3456 or Fax: 216-382-5105.

*Menu Choices:

Mustard Encrusted Pork Chop, Chicken
Marsala, or Vegetarian Pasta

HIGHLIGHTS OF CONVENTION CENTER FORUM

A new Convention Center for Greater Cleveland is now on the back burner! The question posed for the October 2003 NOCCA Fall Forum, "Convention Center: Back Burner, Front Burner, or Burnt Out?" has been answered, at least for the time being.

Next time the issue comes up for community conversation, Council members and Mayors attending NOCCA's Fall Forum can say they have a better understanding of the problems with the current center -- both physically and in terms of governance, what a new Center could do for Cleveland, and how it could be governed and financed.

Continued on Page 2

BENNETT'S MUNICIPAL CORNER

ECONOMIC GROWTH: THE ANSWER TO LESS STATE FUNDING FOR CITIES & TOWNSHIPS?

As 2004 dawns many cities in Northeast Ohio will really feel the pinch of less funding from the state. The region will have to look within itself for new sources of funding to maintain the current level of basic services: fire/paramedic, police, and trash collection/disposal. **The best source of new income is economic growth.** No one community in the region can really achieve and sustain the level of economic revival that is needed. To achieve this level of growth **a unified economic strategic plan must be developed and implemented for the region.**

Public and private organizations and public officials are beginning to acknowledge this urgent need for a regional economic development plan and to call for action. For example the First Suburb's Consortium proposed agenda for 2004 stated "...Most importantly...public discussion" [in regard to the new convention center] "did not recognize the need for a publicly funded Cuyahoga County economic redevelopment

plan." In a letter to the editor of the Sun Press (12/18/03 Edition), County Commissioner Tim McCormack wrote "...we have good people who want the best for our community, but we do not have a shared basic knowledge of what our job base is today and what we want and need it to be in the future. We need to commonly, on a community-wide basis, undertake a visioning process. ... Without a shared vision the legitimate competition for search resources will continue to divide us at critical times." Indeed, is this not what has happened in regard to the new convention center proposal?

In response to this divisiveness, Steven Kaufman, a partner in the law firm of Thompson and Hine and president of the Cleveland Bar Association, is leading a study to examine the prospects for a regional government (Plain Dealer 11/23/03). This study is to be conducted by fourteen of Cleveland's largest law firms, the Citizens League and the League of Women Voters. In the same article Cleveland's Mayor Jane

Campbell is quoted as saying: "...The most important thing Cleveland can do for the region, as the heart of the region, is to create and retain jobs." This statement can be broadened to include any city in the region.

On January 29th we will officially meet as the Northeast Ohio City Council Association, Inc., to elect our officers and set our course for 2004. In setting our course for 2004 should our organization spearhead a call and take an active part in the formation and recommended funding for a Council of Governments charged with the development of a unified regional economic development plan?

Come to the meeting and voice your opinion or e-mail me at sdblue@sbcglobal.net.

*Submitted by
Steven Bennett
City of University Heights*

HIGHLIGHTS OF CONVENTION CENTER FORUM - Continued from Page 1



To provide this information, NOCCA collaborated with the Cuyahoga County Mayors and Managers Assn. and offered mayors and city council members the opportunity to hear from leaders actively involved in Convention Center discussions. **Dennis Roche**, Interim Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and **Bruce Akers**, Mayor of Pepper Pike and outgoing President of the County Mayors and Managers Assn., provided factual information and their own assessment and then engaged in lively dialogue with attendees.

The current Convention Center was highly praised when it was built, the second in the country. Today it is a technological relic and internal structural problems cannot be fixed. Governance is also a problem - the center is run by a City department and occupancy stands at a low 8 %.

A new Convention Center would not be the cure-all to Cleveland's economic problems, but it is key to keeping us competitive, to keeping the convention business we have. Our goal would be to be the #1 convention city among second tier cities - with a new Convention Center that should be doable because Cleveland is a #1 tier city in amenities - arts, culture, and entertainment.

An independent regional authority would be set up to govern a new Convention Center. The Convention Financing Authority would include 4 representatives from the City, 4 from the county, and 3 from the Mayors and Managers Assn. Their job would be to make the site decision, figure out what to do with the current facility, plan the process for getting a final design, get the building built, and run the building. The CFA would stay out of marketing the facility - the Convention and Visitors Bureau would continue to do that.

A sales tax increase is no longer being considered as a funding source. Instead, because of action taken at the state level, county commissioners could raise the hotel bed tax, and county residents would vote on an increase in the restaurant/dining tax. Thus, visitors to Cleveland and frequent restaurant diners would bear the brunt of financing a new Convention Center.

Business groups like the Growth Association and Cleveland Tomorrow and labor groups like the AFL-CIO voice support for a new convention center. Business groups say that the foot traffic of convention attendees will help to revitalize downtown, and the 65,000 people in the hospitality industry need the business generated by conventions. Labor groups see an increase in construction and hospitality jobs and note that more than half of hospitality workers are Cleveland residents.

Stay tuned for the next round of discussion on this community issue!

*Submitted by
Jan Devereaux
City of Shaker Heights*

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Pepper Pike*

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