

NOCCA NEWS

A newsletter published by the
Northeast Ohio City Council Association, Inc.
Volume 2, Issue 1 January, 2005

NOCCA

Northeast Ohio City Council Association, Inc.



Message from the President

It does not seem possible that we are arriving at the end of 2004. The year's ending is also an ending of my term as President of NOCCA. As I can remain on the board in the capacity of Past President, I will not be going far, but I will be turning over the baton as it were and assisting as others carry the mission and purpose forward for this dynamic organization.

This past year went quickly and proved to be a thoroughly enjoyable and productive experience as we pursued topics of great interest which were received enthusiastically. A brief review of the past year's issues is covered by Steve Bennett's Municipal Corner. I would be remiss if I fail to acknowledge the entire Board's thanks and appreciation again to our presenters. In January Tom Bier of Cleveland State University and City of Cleveland Planning Director Chris Ronayne illuminated us as to what we as a County must do to move from just development focused thinking to redevelopment initiatives. Their information was augmented in the spring by Steven Kaufman, President of the Bar Association, Mark S. Rosentraub from CSU Levin College, and Mike Thomas of the Citizens League as they defined County government reform. Andrew Reese gave a phenomenal presentation on EPA Phase II storm regulations followed by Ed Morrison's equally inspiring discussion of regional relationships and collaborations. If you missed any of these highly qualified speakers, you missed truly informative and dialogue inducing presentations. NOCCA salutes their efforts and looks forward to partnering again with them all in the future.

I must take this opportunity to thank and praise my fellow board members whose patience and support of me continued from my first year as their leader through the second year. Their friendship means as much to me as their talent and skills amaze me. Truly, the communities they represent and serve are indeed fortunate and finer due to the integrity and skills they possess. I am grateful to have been a member of the board for these several years as our organization has grown so dramatically. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve.

Finally, I repeat one of my requests of last year at this time. Please take it to heart and know that by helping NOCCA, you inevitably help your community and our region to a better future.

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.

May the Holidays bless you with peace; may all your needs be met, and may your future be bright with hope.

Civically yours,

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

FALL FORUM RECAP

The November Forum "Cuyahoga County: Collaborating to Compete" held at the City Club in Cleveland was exceptional. The principle speaker was Mr. Ed Morrison, Executive Director for the Center for Regional Economic Issues at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. Mr. Morrison is a nationally recognized expert in the field of strategic economic development. His nineteen years of work throughout the United States earned him the first Arthur D. Little Award for Excellence in Economic Development presented by the prestigious American Economic Development Council.

Mr. Morrison began his presentation by defining Regionalism. The term Regionalism is such a broad term it tends to scare people and turn them off for fear of losing their identity and autonomy. Yet, a number of simultaneous policy discussions are taking place throughout the region. The economic region of Northeast Ohio represents 22 counties in Ohio and one in Pennsylvania. This region includes 4.7 million people and is big enough to compete on a global scale. Let's "think out of the box".

Mr. Morrison delved into core issues on this topic such as: **How can we govern ourselves more effectively? How do we get regional economic development "to scale?" How do we market Northeast Ohio to outside investors? How do we develop globally competitive strategies?**

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PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL FORUM

**THURSDAY,
January 27, 2005**

**Holiday Inn
Cleveland South
6001 Rockside Road
Independence**

**"The Leadership Vision for
the Future of Cuyahoga
County."**

GUEST SPEAKERS:

**THE HONORABLE
COMMISSIONERS:**

**JIMMY DIMORA, TIM HAGAN
AND TIMOTHY McCORMACK**

Registration, Meet and Greet, and Cash Bar	6:00 pm
Welcome	6:45 pm
Dinner*	7:00 pm
Program	8:00 pm

*Dinner is **FREE OF CHARGE** for **PAID MEMBERS**. Member Guests are \$30.00 each. Non-Member Guests are \$35.00 each. Failure to cancel a registration 24 hours prior to the event will result in billing of members, guests and non-members.

Please make your reservations by
Monday, January 24, 2005
to Cheryl McNulty
Phone: 216-382-3456 Fax: 216-382-5105

Menu Choice: Salmon Florentine
or Chicken Saltimbocca
Vegetarian option available

BENNETT'S MUNICIPAL CORNER

2004 FORUMS IN REVIEW

In 2004 NOCCA held our usual four forums with increased energy and results. A year ago the Winter 2004 column rang in the forum discussion about "Economic Growth: the answer to less state funding for cities and townships".

Conclusions to the discussion focused on the need, implementation and responsibility for a coordinated regional economic development plan. The conflict between Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland over Whiskey Island underscores that the need for such a plan is still there.

Our spring forum discussions honed in on the push for a ballot issue to change the form of County government from three elected commissioners to a County Executive/Council governing form. Proponents of the issue cited that the

changes were vital to the economic future of the county and region. The issue came close but fell short of the required signatures to make the ballot.

The summer found us learning about EPA Phase II storm water regulations requiring storm water runoff and watershed management. A topic and a highly qualified and engaging speaker which triggered interest in holding a weekend workshop this winter to further expand our knowledge.

This fall our discussions were fueled by the topic of limited regionalism in the form of mutual cooperative agreements between cities, villages and townships, primarily to cut costs and/or to meet increased costs on a controlled basis.

As we ring in 2005, recent news stories

regarding the poverty level in the area and the rise of defaults on mortgages while other areas in Ohio did not experience such a rise, support the NOCCA 2004 forum discussion conclusions that call for formulation and implementation of a **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**.

Will 2005 be the year that produces that plan and its implementation to bring the area out of its economic slump? In 2005, come to the NOCCA forums to ask your questions and add your ideas and solutions.

*Submitted by
Steven Bennett
City of University Heights*



FALL FORUM RECAP - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The presentation on these topics was an eye opening experience. This area is bigger than many states, including Kentucky, Colorado, and South Carolina. The size of Northeast Ohio economy is comparable to Finland or Israel.

Ed then went into the challenges of globalization for the area. The Northeast Ohio economy has undergone two major waves of globalization. The cost driven explosion of global trade created the first wave of globalization and the Internet created the second wave. The push toward globalization is leading regions to begin collaborating in ways they had never considered. It is unfortunate that this means the type of jobs this area is accustomed to have moved to other areas of the globe leaving this area in a situation which requires rethinking where it wants to go.

As a final topic Ed turned to the cost of governing in Cuyahoga County. Generally speaking, Southern states are more competitive than Northern states in the delivery of government services. Ohio has been adding greater

levels of local public employment, despite relatively slow population growth. Cuyahoga County has far higher levels of public employment than comparable counties.

The productivity of the public sector is important, because it plays a tightly connected role with the region's competitive position. We could add accountability to that importance. We can visualize these connections in cycles of "prosperity" and "decline." Civic leaders in Cuyahoga County face a choice of which cycle we will enter. He shared a series of charts comparing this area to other parts of the country. The charts spurred more discussion as to where the area is heading or should be heading.

Our second guest speaker was Vera Vogelsang Coombs, Ph.D., who is an Associate Professor and the MBA Program Director at the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University. She is compiling the survey forms that NOCCA sent out to each of your cities to gather information on exactly what each community is presently doing in the way of collaborative and partnering initiatives. Vera went through the questionnaire and the early results from the cities who had returned their survey form. It raised some interesting discussions which continued for the remainder of the forum. Any city who has not turned in the questionnaire to date, please do so. Request a new form if necessary. We need the whole area to participate in developing and sharing ideas and best practices across boundaries, to help each other avoid problems experienced along the way. Dr. Coombs anticipates developing a document for the entire area to use as a resource for new council members, Mayors, and others.

The Annual Dinner will pick up where we left off as the County Commissioners present their vision for the future. Plan to attend with your entire council.

*Submitted by
Donald Saunders
City of Bedford Heights*

*Season's Greetings
and Happy New Year*

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