



## Message from the President

**L**et me welcome you to the first newsletter of my term. My name is Donald Saunders and I'll be serving as your president this year of NOCCA. I've been on council in the City of Bedford for over seven years and involved in this organization for that long. This is your organization and your input is very valuable. The new officers and board are committed to continuing the forums quarterly on topics that are of interest to all of our communities. I hope that you find the forums this year informative and useful, as have the ones in the past. If there is a topic that you would like to see, please let one of your board members know and we will research it.

This organization is your network to what works and what doesn't in government today. With today's dwindling resources and tax payers expecting us as elected officials to do more with less, it is imperative that we find out best solutions to problems we face today and into the future. We need to work together as communities today to get the best bang for our buck. We can no longer afford to make mistakes others may have already experienced. Networking our communities together with organizations like NOCCA should help in reducing our mistakes to only original ones, not repeat ones. We are in this together and it is going to take togetherness to weather these tough economic times. So stay tuned and I hope NOCCA helps you and your City out this year.

Civically yours,  
**Donald Saunders**  
 President, N.O.C.C.A., Inc.

## JANUARY ANNUAL DINNER AND FORUM REVIEW

The January 2005 Annual Dinner meeting and election was well attended and enjoyed. Following dinner the ever-gregarious and affable Honorable County Commissioner Jimmy Dimora conducted the installation of the newly elected board and officers. Mr. Dimora commenced to introduce his fellow commissioner as very articulate and intelligent and one who would deliver an enlightened message of the vision the commissioners hold for the future of Cuyahoga County.

The **Honorable Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones** began by noting several of our members' contributions, including **Ken Kovach** of Shaker Heights who served as the first President of NOCCA and who continues to serve on the council that Peter had; **Brian Parker** who will continue Shaker Heights representation on our board as Treasurer; newly appointed East Cleveland councilor, **Gary Norton** who is also an executive assistant to Peter; and **Ron Lisy** of Bedford council who was a former opponent of Peter's. He kindly noted the considerable loss to the entire community of **Mary Zone**, and spoke of her immense contributions made as a former Cleveland council person. Mary demonstrated enormous courage often when taking positions on sensitive issues of race at a time when it might have penalized her politically. Her son Matt continues to serve on Cleveland council and follows her example of a great public servant and human being.

The government closest to the people and in the unenviable position of being so accessible is the local municipal office where Peter started. His ten years at that level prepared him for everything that followed. Peter stated that NOCCA is more important today than ever before. The collaborations, city to city, village to village, that take place are critical in this day and time. The County is currently looking to hire an individual who will work with municipalities, townships, and school boards, to help find more ways to collaboratively, cost effectively, and more efficiently deliver services. The cost of government in greater Cleveland is higher than anywhere else in the state. There is a finite number of resources available to the local level and to the county. This causes the demand for innovative ways to deliver the same level of services. There is a mandate to identify and create mutual ways of saving dollars. This is what the county defines as the need for intra-county regionalism as cooperation between municipalities, townships and schools to deliver those services. David Akers, Mayor Akers son, is engaged in a grant from the Cleveland Foundation to identify ways of joint purchasing as a **Regional Council of Governments**. The county feels their added new liaison position is essential to helping these efforts.

Beyond the influence of his fellow commissioners, the three most important people who impact on Peter's vision of county government are Ryan Charles Jones age 16, Leah Danielle Jones age 12, and Evan Cook Jones age 4. He sees our challenge as making sure this is the kind of community that all of our children and grandchildren, will consider returning to. It is our responsibility to eliminate the job and brain drain that's afflicting us. Our children are being seduced by Seattle, Los Angeles, Boston, and San Francisco. We must have a strategic vision to ensure our children can say "I can see where I can fulfill my life and ambitions right here in northeast Ohio."

Historically, county government has provided health and human services and kept the safety net of those services intact. The responsibilities have grown to include providing work force development programs to guarantee a skilled labor force in a modern, high tech economy. Family stabilization is key. During his state representative tenure Peter established **Fatherhood Programs** aimed at involving low income fathers in their responsibility to raise and nurture their children. Too many children are growing up with no male role model. No matter the demographics of the community there is a dire need for programs that aim to prevent what he refers to as premature fatherhood and that deal with father absence. As he sees it, "A young man should make no child before his time." When fathers are absent the effects correlate with every social pathology that exists: high drop out rates, more likely drug use, more likely mental health issues, more likely to be a victim of every form of social problem that occurs. A fatherhood program is not pro father but at its root it is pro family, it is pro child. The county has committed a million dollars to this initiative this year.

**Economic Development Summits** have determined that economic development is job one no matter our elected position. Prior Poverty Summits determined what you have to do to ameliorate and address poverty. You have to have: strong families, well trained workers, and a strong public education system. To accomplish that you have to have JOBS available. The county has become much more involved in economic development. Until two budgets ago, any county dollars committed to economic development were state or federal dollars and came with strings attached. Finally in the 2004 budget a little more than four million dollars were appropriated to help a broader range of businesses with economic development. First, dollars became available as loans for small businesses who want to locate, remain, or grow operations here. Then, "**Destination Cleveland Program**" dollars were set aside. Now as Peter learned, the best dollars to get are OPD, other peoples dollars/other peoples money, OPM. There are three types of dollars - good dollars, bad dollars, and neutral dollars.

The bad dollar is the dollar that is made in the community and exported/spent elsewhere. The neutral dollar is made in the community and then used

## PLAN TO ATTEND THE SPRING FORUM

**THURSDAY,**  
 April 28, 2005

**City Club  
 of Cleveland**  
 850 Euclid Ave., 2nd Floor  
 Cleveland 44114

**"What Can Your City  
 Expect from State Tax  
 Reform?"**

### GUEST SPEAKER:

**THE HONORABLE  
 SALLY CONWAY KILBANE**  
 OHIO STATE REPRESENTATIVE,  
 18TH DISTRICT

|                              |         |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Registration, Meet and Greet | 6:00 pm |
| Introductions                | 7:00 pm |
| Speaker followed by Q & A    | 7:15 pm |
| Meeting Concludes            | 9:00 pm |

FREE OF CHARGE for ALL. NOCCA paid members also park free! Non-members and guests will pay for parking.

Please make your reservations by  
 Monday, April 25, 2005  
 to Cheryl McNulty  
 Phone: 216-382-3456 Fax: 216-382-5105

## BENNETT'S MUNICIPAL CORNER



### FROM STATE LGF FUND CUTS TO LOCAL CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES

For many years LGF funding from the State of Ohio has been a stable current in the income stream of cities and villages. Local government taxing levels to meet services from trash collection to EMS squads factored in this stability. The last biannual state budget however brought cuts in the LGF. Now state legislators are telling cities and villages that the LGF funding level will again be cut to meet other state priorities from education to highways and to balance the state budget. In reaction to the last cut, many city and village councils have already had to cut some services and/or have had to place local tax increases on the ballot. To offset the current impending LGF funding level cuts, state legislators are encouraging cities and villages to consolidate services and possibly even governments. In fact, before the LGF funding cuts, cities and villages in northeast Ohio had already

begun consolidating services to meet stiffer federal and state operational and safety standards. Joint (consolidated) operations such as joint purchasing groups, area SWAT and Haz Mat Response teams, and multi-city centralized fire and ambulance/rescue squad dispatch had been formed and made operational. Consolidation is not an overnight process. There are many legal and labor agreement hurdles that must be met and/or negotiated. In addition, there are operational control, response and cost efficiency issues that limit the optimal size of consolidations. That is, bigger or larger is not necessarily better or more cost saving. Locally, the trend leading into the future seems to be the development over time of planned consolidation of services from trash pick up, to street maintenance, to snow plowing, to emergency response teams, etc. That is, large enough to be cost saving

and cost effective, yet small enough to be responsive to individual resident needs. This means that some consolidations will include only three to four cities or villages, while others may be county or even northeast Ohio region wide. To date, the most common control vehicle for consolidation for local governments has not been to consolidate governments but to form a council of governments. NOPEC and the First Suburbs Consortium are recent examples of control by a council of governments.

Rather than speculate about the next biannual state budget, come to the NOCCA Spring forum on April 28, 2005 at the City Club to find out what you can expect from your state tax reform.

Submitted by  
Steven Bennett  
City of University Heights

### JANUARY ANNUAL DINNER AND FORUM REVIEW - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to purchase a service within the community, an essential transaction which keeps the local economy going but does not bolster or build assets. The good dollar is the dollar brought in from the outside. This is the dollar that comes from the events the county provides support to such as The Gravity Games, the International Children's Games, the Olympic Boxing Trials, or the Ohio Classic Football games due to return this year. These are events that otherwise might not come to Cleveland.

Also established by the county is the **ACE Development Fund**, Arts in Culture as Economic Development Fund. The fact that one of our greatest assets is our arts and cultural institutions and that we have the best arts and cultural offerings between NYC and Chicago is indisputable. Over 3,600 jobs were created and a contribution of \$1.1 billion to the local economy. The county has found a way to use public support to help the arts offer new programs that have economic impact, and that builds our profile as one of the finest arts and cultural centers in the nation.

The county has created a wonderful new program, **New Product Development and Entrepreneurship** that offers to help those with creative, innovative ideas with the dollars to support necessary activities that will get their products to market. The requirement is that once started they must keep their manufacturing in Cuyahoga County for at least 7 years.

Peter noted several persons in the room are participating in the **Blue Ribbon Economic Development Task Force** for the county. For the last year, individuals from the private sector, public sector, higher education, the charitable foundations, all the leaders and top minds in the region have gathered monthly to help the county shape its economic development programs in order to maximize the dollars being spent. The task force is helping to craft a public policy white paper to take to the state and federal governments to request, (make public policy demands for), the kind of wherewithal, latitude and discretion needed at the local level to maximize economic development opportunities and ensure prosperity for the county. In the appropriations process, Ohio is too often a donor state; greater Cleveland is too often a donor region. We must be in a position to impact public policy in Columbus and DC for our own collective betterment. Finally, the task force is examining the many economic development plans to transform them into a single document that we can act upon to once again advance the economic interests of our community. The county is in fact more involved than ever in job creation, attraction, and retention.

Given the fact that NOCCA is a regional organization, Peter felt it important to talk about **REGIONALISM**. To Peter there are four kinds: 1) Inter-County: one county building relationships with others to advance a common agenda; 2) Intra-County: those activities within a county that allow municipalities to work together to more efficiently provide services; 3) Service Specific Regionalism: Greater Cleveland RTA, NOACA, NE Ohio Regional Sewer District, Metro Parks; and 4) Unigovernment or Metrogovernment: where the walls of communities will come tumbling down and we would become one big happy family. We can take steps to build relationships along county lines, city lines, and do what we can to bolster service specific regionalism.

A few years ago the county convened the **Regional Economic Development Summit** and began working with other counties to "get on the same page" in a multi jurisdictional bipartisan way, and begin to lobby and advocate on behalf of northeast Ohio. They started in 2003 on the state budget and did a good job reaching consensus on key issues, inviting state legislators to hear eight counties share the things their municipalities had in common that were impacted by a not too kind budget. Results were a smoothing of some of the harsher edges of that budget. At last summer's summit a resolution was passed by ten counties to form the **Northeast Ohio League for Leadership and Advocacy, NOLLA**. With no fees required from the member counties, NOLLA is charged with the responsibility of promoting the interest of Northeast Ohio in Columbus and Washington D. C. If we have not already been, our communities will be asked to pass resolution in support of NOLLA.

The concept of regionalism was the hot topic of questions posed. Peter stated northeast Ohio is lagging behind in every critical standard of quality of life in the country. He stated that we cannot afford to continue to be divided based on city vs. suburb, democrat vs. republican, black vs. white vs. red vs. brown vs. yellow, Jew vs. gentile, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, etc. We cannot afford it if we want this county to recapture its luster. We must help efforts like those of the Blue Ribbon Economic Task Force as they craft an economic development agenda to re-brand this area. We must use our natural assets as an economic tool: our diversity, our arts and culture, our waterfront (and fresh water, and wind power), the research and development at CWRU, The Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals (our very own research triangle) Metro Health and NASA. Key cutting edge technology such as bio tech and nano tech, and machine development (Cleveland is third in the world) which need to be marketed.

Peter concluded by giving the commissioners' phone numbers. Jimmy Dimora: 443-7180 ~ Tim Hagan: 443-7181 ~ Peter Lawson Jones: 443-7182 (All 216) We are invited to call about the county's vision and help make our community one that Ryan, Leah, and Evan will choose to belong to. On behalf of all in attendance, I would like to thank Peter again for giving an insightful message. We are encouraged.

Submitted by,  
Kathryn E. Gambatese  
City of Richmond Heights

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