

Reflecting on a Wonderful Year in Boone County



As we prepare to turn the page of the calendar to a new year, it is the perfect time to reflect on the many blessings that we have enjoyed in Boone County during 2016, as well as, look ahead to the opportunities and challenges that we face. Surrounded by natural beauty, we are so fortunate to live in a county that has a strong economy, amazing cities, welcoming communities and leaders dedicated to improving the lives of our citizens. All of this is made possible, though, because of the wonderful people who make Boone County so special.

The past year has been positive for Boone County. We experienced strong economic development, low unemployment (3.1% in November) and low local tax rates for our citizens. We have a dynamic economy, demonstrated by 21 straight quarters of payroll tax receipt increases, were rated in the top 5% nationally for talent attraction by EMSI (an economic data

advisory company) and have benefited from significant investments from the businesses in the community. The county commissioners have worked with me to be good stewards of the public's resources, adopting a budget that reduced long term debt, solidified emergency reserves, and addressed a number of needed capital improvements, all while maintaining low local tax rates. We also reaffirmed our commitment to transparent government by being the first county in Kentucky to launch OpenGov on its website, giving the public complete access to the county's finances.

One area in which I am very pleased to report good news is the upcoming improvements to the county's transportation network. We were able to work hand in hand with our state elected officials to successfully include a number of projects in the current road plan that are critical to addressing challenges that our citizens face in their daily lives. I am happy to share that work has begun on the reconstruction of Mt. Zion Road and that work will begin next year on completion of the middle section of Pleasant Valley/ Camp Ernst Road. Work will begin soon on intersection improvements at US 42 and Weaver Road and North Bend Road and World-Wide Blvd, as well as, an extension of Veterans Way. Improvements are being planned for Rice Pike and the interstate interchanges at both Mt. Zion and Richwood Road. A study is now underway to gather data and potential design options for a new interchange at Graves Road to help ease congestion in the Hebron community. These projects compliment a number of county road enhancements, sidewalk expansions and intersection improvements that are funded and being planned for the near future.

Even with all of this good news, Boone County faces several challenges in meeting the needs of a prosperous community. Actually, I look at these challenges more as opportunities to better serve our citizens. To begin seizing these opportunities, we will be updating the county's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the county's Transportation Plan during the next year. There will be a number of opportunities for citizens to be fully engaged in developing these plans that will guide the county's development for the next decade. Please watch the county's website, social media and the local media for more information on participating in this process. Good planning will help us address long term challenges;

however, we have the responsibility to begin addressing the immediate needs of the county now. These include the upgrade of our emergency communications system to protect our citizens and first responders, immediate transportation projects and ensuring public infrastructure is maintained appropriately. We will be having discussion about how best to address these issues in the coming months.

It is such an honor to serve as your Judge/Executive. We have been truly blessed in Boone County and have so much for which to be thankful. Together, we can continue to work towards meeting our needs and ensuring that Boone County continues to be a great place to live, work and raise a family.