



Partial clearing, breezy, cool; High 48



LEADERS OF THE PACK

Daviess County boys capture 8th state cross country title; Elizabeth Miller, Justin House, Landon Taylor, Aaron Poore place in top 10/B1

Lifestyle: If you want to take Obama tour, better pack globe/G1



VANQUISHED BY VANDY

Wildcats' fourth-quarter comeback bid falls short as Kentucky loses to Vanderbilt, 31-24/B1

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DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

'A Bold Move'

Planners unveil proposal to revive city's core

By Owen Covington
Messenger-Inquirer

Gateway Planning Group laid out an \$80 million package of projects designed to boost private investment in downtown and make the city's core once again a vibrant part of the community.

The downtown package includes a mixed-use indoor events center, completion of planned improvements to Smothers Park and a new "market square plaza" connecting the county courthouse to the riverfront.

Now city and county officials will begin mulling over how to proceed with the plan and how to pay for it.

"You have an opportunity to reinvigorate this downtown," said Scott Polikov, president of the Fort Worth-based Gateway Planning Group.

"Conservatively, we believe this is the minimum threshold of projects to be packaged up and take advantage of what's already been invested downtown."

Polikov and his team offered up this newest, more-refined and specific version of the plan to a crowd of more than 150 in Jones Gymnasium at Kentucky Wesleyan College as part of the We the People Town Meeting anniversary.

Along with figuring a price tag for the package of projects, Gateway staff is offering a look at the options local government has to finance the investment,



Scott Polikov
Gateway Planning Group president



This artist's rendering of downtown Owensboro was presented during the We the People presentation Saturday at Kentucky Wesleyan College

"We've got a whole generation and a half that have never known activity downtown. I look forward to changing that."

— Kimberly Johnson

including possible increases in the occupational and insurance premium tax rates.

Owensboro Mayor Tom Watson described the plan as "a bold move" and said investment now will mean more revenue for local government in the future.

"We have to have some courage to increase our revenue opportunities," Watson said. "It's bold, and it's very, very doable. The timing is right."

Daviess County Judge-Executive Reid Haire said whether and how the city and county move forward will be dependent in large part on the support in the community at large.

"It would be important to me to get feedback from the community if it is interested enough to be willing to pay for it," Haire said after a separate briefing on the plan for city and county elected officials.

Developing the plan

Work on the downtown master plan began this spring as a joint venture between the city, county and business organizations.

Planners with the Gateway group spent a week in Owensboro

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Gary Emord-Netzley, Messenger-Inquirer

Jim Zabek, left, a resident of Owensboro for almost 30 years, voices his support for the downtown development plan while Virginia Marx, a member of the We the People Leadership Council, holds a microphone during a question-and-answer session Saturday in the Jones Gymnasium on the Kentucky Wesleyan College campus.

Highlights of Master Plan

■ A 60,000-square-foot mixed-use indoor events center.

■ A \$4.8 million market square plaza between Second Street and Veterans Boulevard.

■ Proposed improvements to downtown streets, including making Second Street a two-way street.

■ A new parking structure with 500 spaces at a cost of \$7.5 million.

■ A \$5 million arts academy.

FINANCIAL CRISIS

Leaders take modest steps to fight economic meltdown



Associated Press

President George W. Bush speaks about the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy in Washington on Saturday.

Safeguards suggested, but no actions taken

By Jennifer Loven
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — World leaders battling a dire and deepening economic crisis vowed Saturday to cooperate more closely, keep a sharper eye out for red-flag problems and give bigger roles to fast-rising nations — but they kicked many hard details down the road for their next summit after President-elect Barack Obama takes office.

Perhaps as important as the modest concrete steps they took, the leaders of the planet's richest

nations — and some of the fastest-developing — made clear their recognition of the world's increasingly interconnected financial architecture and the responsibilities that go along with it.

"There shall be no blind spots," German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared. "There is here a great common will to ensure that such a crisis is not repeated."

Underscoring how bad things have gotten this time, President George W. Bush, the summit host, said he had agreed to the recent \$700 billion rescue plan for U.S. financial institutions only

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Printed with soy ink



Overseas gift collection becomes regional push

By Beth Wilberding
Messenger-Inquirer

A shoe box and a few inexpensive treats might make the holidays brighter for a child living in another country.

Grace Chapel Church of God in Philpot is once again a drop-off center for Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse that sends shoe boxes filled with treats and toiletries to children around the world.

"It's just an awesome thing," said Lena Fulkerson, who coordinates the local Operation Christmas Child with her husband, Joe.

The National Collection Week for Operation Christmas Child begins Monday and runs until Nov. 24. This year, Grace Chapel Church of God has recruited several area churches to be relay stations for Operation Christmas

Child. Residents are asked to fill shoe boxes on their own and drop them off at Grace Chapel or one of the relay centers: Owensboro Christian Church, Livermore United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church of Henderson, Hawesville United Methodist Church and Grace Fellowship Ministries in Madisonville.

"People can take shoe boxes to them if it's closer for them to go there than all the way to Philpot," Lena Fulkerson said. "We're just trying to make it easier on everybody this year."

Standard-size shoe boxes or a small plastic container should be selected, and people can wrap the box if they want. The lid should be wrapped separately.

Donors then choose to fill the

See **Gift/Page A2**

Bold: Tax hikes possible

From the **Front Page**

in September conducting public meetings to solicit input on what elements are needed to revitalize downtown and what capital projects are critical for its redevelopment.

That week of work produced the bulk of the plan's design, which builds on the riverfront development work already under way.

This week, the city awarded the \$37.6 million contract for a new river wall stretching between the RiverPark Center and Mitch McConnell Plaza and an expansion of Smothers Park by 2 acres.

Polikov explained that the plan is based upon the goal of creating a walkable downtown that emphasizes mixed-use development.

Downtown today includes fewer buildings than it did 100 years ago, which makes it less attractive to foot traffic, Polikov said.

"What we're trying to do is create an environment where we can fill those gaps back in," Polikov said.

Kimberly Johnson said after the plan's presentation that people in the community under the age of 30 don't know what Owensboro was like with a bustling downtown.

"We've got a whole generation and a half that have never known activity downtown," Johnson said. "I look forward to changing that."

The first phase of the plan

While presenting an overarching plan for downtown between Clay and Poplar streets stretching back to Fifth Street and further south on the Frederica Street corridor, Polikov and Gateway offer an initial package of projects the community should pursue as part of the larger redevelopment efforts.

This initial focus is on the area between the RiverPark Center and the closed Executive Inn Rivermont.

The largest project in the plan is a 60,000-square-foot mixed-use indoor events center at a cost of \$21 million that Gateway is proposing for the site that is occupied by the state office building west of Frederica Street and north of West Second Street.

John Hockenyo, an economist with the firm TXP working with Gateway, looked at events centers in the cities of Bowling Green, LaCrosse, Wis., Hattiesburg, Miss., and Battle Creek, Mich., for his estimate of the size and cost of a similar center in Owensboro.

Michael Huston, an Owensboro native working with Gateway, explained the idea behind the \$4.8 million market square plaza on the east side of Frederica Street between Second Street and Veterans Boulevard.

The open-air plaza would include covered areas along its edges that could be home to a regular farmers market as well as providing space for retail sales kiosks and an open area for people to gather.

"I really think this is a key element of our final design," Huston said. "I think this is one of the big gestures that will really change the face of downtown."

Proposed improvements to downtown streets including making Second Street a two-way street; making Veterans Boulevard a pedestrian boulevard but still open to slow-moving vehicle traffic; and installing medians on Frederica Street north of West Fifth Street to make it more of a gateway to the riverfront.

"We start thinking of streets as for more than just vehicles and to move cars," said Andrew Howard, a transportation planner with Kimley-Horn & Associates and part of the Gateway team.

Those improvements, which would include extensive traffic studies, carry a cost of \$12.9 million.

Other portions of the six-part plan include a new parking structure with 500 spaces, at a cost of \$7.5 million, and a \$5 million arts academy that would be a partnership between area schools, colleges and universities and the arts community.

Hockenyo led the development of potential costs for the six projects included in the first phase of development

and added a 20 percent cost contingency to arrive at a total of \$79.5 million.

Other parts of the plan, such as making Frederica Street a trolley corridor, aren't included in this phase of the plan. Also, the plan includes possible locations for an outdoor events center, but the plan won't include a recommendation or financing plan on such a facility.

City Commissioner David Johnson said one of the plan's strengths is that it is data-based and offers a specific course of action.

"We now know what Owensboro can support, what Owensboro needs and what Owensboro can afford," Johnson said.

Financing the package

Hockenyo explained that with current revenues, the city and the county could support about \$25 million in bonds, which leaves about \$55 million to come from other sources, including tax increases.

That money could be funded with an estimated \$5 million in annual debt service, which could be covered if the city and county raise the occupational tax rate by 0.3 percentage points or by raising the insurance premium tax to 7.5 percent, Hockenyo said.

Hockenyo stressed he wasn't making a specific recommendation on how that money be raised but just showing the different options the city and county could consider.

"I think the exact pieces of the financing puzzle are still to be put in place," Hockenyo said. "I wanted to show it can

"We're going to have to realize that to keep up, we're going to have to invest in ourselves, and I hope we're going to want to do that."

— Malcolm Bryant
developer

be done and that it needs to be done as soon as possible."

Because of the economic downturn, construction materials prices are down, and interest rates are lower, making this package of projects even more viable, Hockenyo said.

Local government should develop a

plan based on funding the entire package itself and then use any state and federal dollars that can be secured as reimbursement, Hockenyo said.

"Right now, because of the importance of doing this, my advice to you is to put together a financing package that this community controls 100 percent," Hockenyo said. "It's a great time to be thinking about these things because you are in a lower-cost environment."

Polikov emphasized to the elected officials that the projects were a package deal, not individual projects that should be pursued one at a time.

"It's a package, not a menu," Polikov said.

City Commissioner Candance Castlen Brake said the fact that the projects were packaged made it more appealing.

"I like the package approach," Brake said. "If we try to do it piecemeal, then nothing gets done."

Developer Malcolm Bryant said the investment in downtown is needed to increase the overall economic health of the city and its quality of life.

"It's going to boil down to a question of not 'Can we do it?' but a question of 'Do we want to do it?'" Bryant told the group. "We're going to have to realize that to keep up, we're going to have to invest in ourselves, and I hope we're going to want to do that."

County Commissioner Jim Lambert said he would like to hear from a broader section of the community before deciding how Daviess Fiscal Court should proceed.

"It can't happen unless we have general public support," Lambert said.

The entire 200-page downtown master plan won't be completed until close to the end of the year and will then be put to the city and county governments for their adoption.

The plan also will include proposed changes to planning and zoning regulations to encourage development, and those changes are still being worked on, Polikov said.

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Associated Press

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, center, speaks Saturday at the start of the plenary session of the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy in Washington. At right is French Finance Minister Christine Lagarde.

Steps: Leaders from 21 countries attend

From the **Front Page**

after being told the nation was at risk of falling into "a depression greater than the Great Depression."

Also significant at the summit: the inclusion of a far broader range of countries than the elite, old-guard group that usually holds such summit meetings.

"Emerging-market countries were not the cause of this crisis, but they are amongst its worst affected victims," declared Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Leaders from 21 nations and four international organizations attended the emergency summit that was held as Washington was blanketed in a gray mist and which took on a workaday feel appropriate to the grim crisis that drew them together. At the conclusion of talks that took place over two days, they released a joint communique that was modest in scope but high in hopes.

Covering eight pages and 47 action items, the document's overarching focus is to establish a series of new safeguards for the fragile and opaque global financial system. Nearly all the efforts are aimed in some way at better flagging risky investment patterns and regulatory weak spots before they bring down companies and then ripple dangerously through entire economies, as has happened in recent months.

To that end, the leaders called for such mundane things as "supervisory colleges" where financial regulators can compare market notes across countries, better cooperation between nations on regulations, the eventual standardization of accounting rules governing how companies can value potentially tricky assets, and new attention to credit-rating agencies.

The leaders also supported expanding the membership of the Financial Stability Forum, a group that has been examining the causes of the financial crisis and crafting ways to prevent future problems. And the group called for broadening the financial police work of the 63-year-old International Monetary Fund as well as modernizing the institution to better keep pace with the changing economic environment.

None of the items was splashy, and most would be understandable to few outside of financial experts, but officials argued they have far-reaching potential.

"It's not glamour," said French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

More than two dozen items were slated for some level of action by the end of March, around the time the leaders expect to gather again, with the rest left for later. Concrete proposals were few, however, with most details slated to be worked out by finance ministers in the coming months and beyond.

The leaders also discussed the shorter-term problem of how to bring their nations' economies back from the brink. Some had pushed ahead of time for a pledge of coordinated new government stimulus spending by each nation.

But with Bush cool to such action in the U.S., the communique only endorsed taking such action "as appropriate."

A handful of the hundreds of protesters that flocked to the U.S. capital city succinctly summed up skepticism about

their benefit to the families around the world who are increasingly worried about mortgages, retirement savings and jobs. "Money for people's needs, not bankers' greed," said their bright yellow signs.

The talks were undoubtedly remarkable, however, for drawing together such a collection of nations and bringing them to agreement on a set of actions, however limited, in less than a month's time.

Leaders from major powers including Britain, Germany, France and Japan were there, alongside rulers from developing countries such as China, India, Brazil and South Korea as well as from the oil-rich Gulf state of Saudi Arabia. The summit was just announced Oct. 22,

and the urgency of the downward-spiraling global economic situation led to much faster action than is typical in the usually glacial diplomatic arena.

With fears high that signs of discord among the world's most powerful politicians could send markets plunging again come Monday, the presidents and prime ministers appeared uncharacteristically determined to hold their tongues about any disagreement over either the cause of the current crisis or their compromise agreement. This despite the fact that the action plan seemed to be leaning in most areas far more toward the U.S. preference for boosting oversight and free-market incentives than the European desire for increased regulation and requirements.

Sarkozy, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso emerged with praise for the meeting as a sign of historic cooperation.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper said after the summit that "despite the great diversity of countries in the room for those two days of the summit, there was a practically unanimous agreement on all major topics."

Bush, though, is on his way out of office, and the leaders were clearly looking beyond him to his successor. Many met on the sidelines of the summit with Obama's surrogates, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Republican Rep. Jim Leach of Iowa, while speculating about whether the Democratic president-elect might veer from Bush's approach by the time of the next summit.

"The president-elect believes that the G-20 summit of leaders from the world's largest economies is an important opportunity to seek a coordinated response to the global financial crisis," Albright and Leach said in a statement late Saturday. "There is one president at a time, so the president-elect asked us to represent him in receiving the views of these important partners. We also conveyed President-elect Obama's determination to con-

tinuing to work together on these challenges after he takes office in January."

Still, Bush made sure he kept an iron grip on the proceedings. His was the only voice heard in any official setting — during the toast at Friday's dinner and before and after the closed summit meetings. All the other leaders had to scramble to set up briefings or news conferences at alternative sites in order to express their thoughts.

The inclusion of the developing nations was demanded by Bush, in part in hopes they would act as a brake on European desires for tough new regulations of financial firms or products. But the decision also was hailed as necessary to the effectiveness of such a meeting because the financial crisis that began in the U.S. had spread to the poorer nations.

Indeed, one goal of the meeting was to boost the effort to help such struggling nations weather the financial crisis largely caused by their bigger, more developed counterparts. Japan's prime minister, Tarō Aso, urged China and others to contribute to the International Monetary Fund's \$250 billion bailout pool, aimed mostly at poorer countries. Japan on Friday said it was ready to put in as much as \$100 billion.

Talk of blame was kept to a minimum, though many still hold the belief that the primary fault for the cascade of ruinous events lies with a U.S., where it has become the norm to offer easy credit, outsized rewards for high-risk investing and lax oversight to the process.

Associated Press writers Jeannine Aversa, Martin Crutsinger, Emma Vandore, Michael Fischer, David Stringer and Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

Relay Centers

Each relay center has different hours to be open this week to collect presents for Operation Christmas Child.

■ For more information, call Grace Chapel Church of God, 729-9157; Owensboro Christian Church, 683-2706; Livermore United Methodist Church, 278-2227; Presbyterian Church of Henderson, 826-3981; Hawesville United Methodist Church, 927-8404; and Grace Fellowship Ministries in Madisonville, 821-6281.

■ For more information on Operation Christmas Child or what kind of presents to select, visit www.samaritanspurse.org.

Gift: Don't send food

From the **Front Page**

box for either a boy or a girl in the following age categories: 2 to 4, 5 to 9 or 10 to 14. A label is available on the Operation Christmas Child section of Samaritan's Purse's Web site that donors should place on the box.

A \$7 donation is also required to ship the box.

Recommended gifts include toys such as small cars, balls, dolls and stuffed animals, school supplies, hygiene items, and hard candy, which should be double-bagged.

There are also several items that Samaritan's Purse asks people not to donate, including used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns; food; and medications.

People can also include a personal note or picture of their family in a separate envelope. Also included is a pamphlet with the story of Jesus written on it, Fulkerson said. Pamphlets have been written in several languages.

Last year, 7.8 million shoe boxes were sent to 91 countries, including Kenya, Ukraine and Mexico, Fulkerson said. More than 61 million shoe boxes have been shipped since 1993, according to Samaritan's Purse's Web site.

This is the first year that Owensboro Christian Church is participating as a relay site. Families and youth groups from the church have filled shoe boxes in the past, said Dan Eaton, family life pastor at the church.

"(I'm) just amazed at how people responded to it... We saw a big response from our church," he said. "It's something families can do together. It's certainly very tangible. Young kids can see: Here is a project I can put together. It's more concrete that just taking them to raise money or something like that. And who doesn't like to receive a present?"

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