

Heartland Pkwy Foundation holds inaugural meeting Wednesday

John Chowning, chair of group, says Heartland Parkway will major north-south connector. Columbia Mayor Pat Bell is secretary of Kentucky Heartland Parkway Foundation; several Adair Counties at meeting, including Senator Vernie McGaha, former Judge R.L. Walker, County Judge Executive Ann Melton, Mayor Bell, AC Sixth District Magistrate Joe Rogers, LWC's Keving Thompson, and Sue Stivers, representing the C-AC Economic Development Authority. Rep. Bam Carney, sends message of support.

With 3 photos. As with all CM front page stories, click on headline for complete story with photos

By Joan C. McKinney, CU news and publications coordinator

The Hon. Brett Guthrie, U.S. Representative-Elect from Kentucky's second congressional district, announced his strong support for the proposed Heartland Parkway during the inaugural meeting of the Kentucky Heartland Parkway Foundation Inc. at Centre Square in Lebanon on December 3, 2008.

"The Heartland Parkway Foundation Inc., a nonprofit corporation with tax exempt status, has been formed to educate the public and build sustained support for the proposed 60-mile Heartland Parkway Project," said John Chowning, Campbellsville University vice president for church and external relations and executive assistant to the president, who serves as chair of the group.

Patty Dunaway, head of the District Four office of the Transportation Cabinet in Elizabethtown, said that the preliminary engineering and environmental study on a portion of the project will be moving forward. More information on future meetings related to the study will be announced by her office.

She said the Transportation Cabinet has been given a challenge to look at all projects to make sure they are fiscally responsible as a part of a "practical solutions" review process.

Other officers of the HPF Board include Washington County Judge-Executive John Settles of Springfield, vice chair; Columbia Mayor Pat Bell, secretary; and Lebanon City Administrator John O. Thomas, treasurer.

Chowning said the Heartland Parkway is a project that was started in 2000-01 with the support of Congressman Ron Lewis, R-Ky., and the board's mission is to educate the public on the importance of the construction of a four-lane highway along the Kentucky 555/55 corridor starting at the Martha Layne Collins Bluegrass Parkway north of Springfield, Ky., to the Louie B. Nunn Cumberland Parkway at Columbia, Ky.

Chowning said the proposed parkway will serve as a major north-south connector that will open up the very heartland of Kentucky and help facilitate in the economic diversification and quality of life in the region.

Chowning: Heartland will increase economics of area by \$2.2 billion

He said the Heartland Parkway will be costly and long-term and will require regional cooperation. The option being studied is adding lanes to the existing Kentucky 555/55 corridor rather than constructing a new route. Chowning said the parkway will increase the economics in the area by \$2.2 billion per year once completed, according to an economic study that was commissioned.

Guthrie, who is a state senator from Bowling Green, expressed his support of the project and that he will continue to work with all the counties working on the project.

He said a pending stimulus package in the United States Congress focusing on building infrastructure may be an appropriate place for the board to work with for additional funding.

"This project is important, and I look forward to making it work," he said.

Dan Kelly, state senator and state senate majority leader from Springfield, Ky., said roads are a costly project especially in these economic times. He said the stimulus package might help, and he hopes revenues grow at the state government level.

"The road funds grow if people drive on roads," he said. "If they don't, it's bad."

Senator McGaha: The Heartland Parkway is a win-win

Vernie McGaha, state senator from Russell Springs, and a native of Adair County, said, "The Heartland Parkway is a win-win situation that will take a lot of cooperation."

He looked over statistics from an economic impact study by Younger Associates and said travel had definitely increased in the area since statistics from the 1970s.

Jimmy Higdon, state representative from Lebanon, said, "We must work together to make it happen. We must pool our resources and increase our clout."

Chowning shared a message of support from State Representative-Elect Bam Carney of Campbellsville, who was unable to attend.

Heartland will particularly help Lindsey Wilson, CU, and St. Catharine colleges

Other officials also expressed their support of the project. Board of director members from Washington, Adair, Marion and Taylor counties were present for the meeting.

The Board consists of the county judge-executives and county seat mayors from the four counties, the economic development directors of each county, representatives of the three higher education institutions (Lindsey Wilson College, Campbellsville University and St. Catharine College), two at-large members from each county, state senators and representatives from the region, representatives of the Lake Cumberland and Lincoln Trail Area Development Districts, and a few at-large members from around the state.

Representatives from the offices of United States Senators Mitch McConnell, R-KY; and Jim Bunning, D-KY,

and U.S. Congressmen Ed Whitfield, R-KY, and U.S. Congressman Ron Lewis, also expressed support of the project. Jim Askins from Bunning's office said, "The group of people here do things the right way. You're on track."

Chowning said the board of directors of the Heartland Parkway Foundation will serve as a leadership team to work with the federal and state governments and others who will study the feasibility, costs and funding of the project.

To get involved in the project, contact Chowning at (270) 789-5520 or jechowning@campbellsville.edu.

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CJE, Mayor at Heartland Parkway meeting



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2008-12-05 - Lebanon, KY - Photo by Joan C. McKinney. CU photo.
Columbia Mayor Patrick R. Bell and Adair County Judge Executive Ann Melton at the Heartland Parkway Foundation held Wednesday, December 5, 2008, in Centre Square in Lebanon, KY. Mayor Bell is Secretary of the multi-county proposed project, which would connect the Bluegrass Parkway north of Springfield with the Louie B. Nunn Parkway on Burkesville Road, in Columbia, KY.
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Vernie MaGaha, Richard Walker at Heartland meeting



2008-12-05 - Lebanon, KY - Photo by Joan C. McKinney. Campbellsville University photo. State Senator Vernie McGaha, left, and former Adair County Judge Executive Richard Lee Walker and Adair County contact for the Beshear administration have worked on many projects together in their years of service. Adair County native McGaha represents the 15th senate district including Adair and Russell counties. They attended the Kentucky Heartland Parkway Foundation Inc. meeting in Lebanon December 3, 2008. [Read More...](#) | [Comments?](#) | [Click here to share, print, or bookmark this photo.](#)

Chowning says Heartland impact on area will be \$2.2 billion



2008-12-05 - Lebanon, KY - Photo by Joan C. McKinney. Campbellsville University photo. John Chowning, chair of the inaugural meeting of the Heartland Parkway Foundation, Inc., holding an economic impact study for the proposed Heartland Parkway project, told the gathering in Lebanon, KY, that

the parkway will have a \$2.2 billion impact on the area economies. The meeting was held Wednesday, December 3, 2008, at Centre Square in Lebanon, KY.
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