



VIEWS & VISIONS

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Spring 2008

Opportunity and Prosperity in the **Mid-Ohio Valley**



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Cover photo courtesy of the Parkersburg Area Roundtable.

Welcoming a New Wave of Growth and Development in the Mid-Ohio Valley

Thomas A. Heywood
Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love LLP



FROM OUR MANAGING PARTNER

Tom Heywood is Managing Partner of Bowles Rice and a former chief of staff to the Honorable Gaston Caperton, Governor of the State of West Virginia. He has significant experience in health care, corporate, finance and commercial law, and is recognized as one of the *Best Lawyers in America* by publishers Woodward & White.

Mr. Heywood is active in the community and in various West Virginia business and trade associations. He serves on the boards of many charitable organizations, including Vision Shared, Imagine West Virginia, the West Virginia Venture Connection, the West Virginia Entrepreneurs Forum, Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation, Thomas Memorial Hospital, West Virginia University Hospitals, the Clay Center and the Kanawha County Library Foundation.

Several years ago the late Senator Martha Wehrle loaned me a copy of *The Frontiersman*. This work of historical fiction by Allan Eckart captured my mind and imagination as few books have, and gave me a new appreciation of the rich heritage I enjoy as a native West Virginian. For this book and many other acts of leadership, mentorship and friendship, I will be forever indebted to Martha.

The Frontiersman tells the story of the first white settlers in our region – then western Virginia – including the story of Simon Kenton, a true pioneer who helped settle what is now Charleston, and who opened up the Ohio River Valley at a time when Ohio was Native American homeland, and Kentucky was shared hunting ground for the settlers and Native Americans.

Like many Americans, I have a fairly informed understanding of how the West was won. However, I had given very little thought to how the Midwest was settled and developed until reading *The Frontiersman*.

In the 1700s, Fort Pitt was a western outpost in our young nation. Settlement and development of much of West Virginia and the Midwest occurred as pioneers and settlers came down the Ohio River and up its tributaries from what are today Pittsburgh and Wheeling. For decades, Wheeling and Parkersburg became important centers for provisioning those who explored and then settled the Midwest, first by boat, and later by wagon, rail and road.

The Ohio River is a remarkable engine of commerce and opportunity. From the days that Simon Kenton and a few other intrepid adventurers first explored the Ohio; through the years of development and growth of American industrial enterprise led by men like Rockefeller, Carnegie, Mellon and others; to today's reality of containerized shipping and global commerce, the Ohio River Valley has offered incredible opportunity and advantage to those who have made it their home.

Today, the opportunity and value of the Mid-Ohio Valley are being rediscovered and leveraged once again.

For those of us in West Virginia, property along the Ohio River affords some of the most developable land we have. Ready transportation and attractive sites are among the many competitive advantages that this region offers. Automobile and truck manufacturers, distribution centers, and industry and commerce of all sorts are now rediscovering the competitive advantages offered by the Mid-Ohio Valley and the greater Parkersburg area.

In this edition of *Views & Visions*, we at Bowles Rice are proud to share the story of the Mid-Ohio Valley as we enter the 21st century. We have a large office in Parkersburg, from which we serve clients up and down the Ohio River in Ohio and West Virginia. We participate actively in the life of communities on the Ohio River, and are excited to be a part of the area's new wave of growth and development.

I wish to thank the many authors in this edition of *Views & Visions* for sharing their insights and observations about this region, talking about the advantages the Ohio Valley offers them and sharing their excitement and enthusiasm about the future. I also wish to thank each of our authors for the work they and their organizations do, day in and day out, to create a brighter future in the Mid-Ohio Valley. A new day is dawning up and down the river, thanks to you.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of *Views & Visions* as much as I have. We look forward to working with you in the years ahead to help bring opportunity and prosperity to the area, continuing the tradition begun years ago by Simon Kenton and many other hardy and committed souls. ▽



Consider the Possibilities

Judith W. Sjostedt, Executive Director
Parkersburg Area Community Foundation

Judy Sjostedt is executive director of "Our Community's Foundation," the Parkersburg Area Community Foundation and Regional Affiliates of Doddridge, Jackson, Little Kanawha Area (Calhoun and Wirt), Mason and Ritchie counties. Joining the Foundation in 1999, Ms. Sjostedt leads an organization that is experiencing rapid growth in service, tripling its assets and regional grant-making over the past eight years.

Ms. Sjostedt serves on the boards of directors of Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield and West Virginia Grantmakers Association. She is a faculty member of the National Council on Foundations' Center for Community Foundation Excellence.

Her career has spanned all economic sectors, as she previously served as the business partnerships program manager for the Education Alliance; president of Key Consultants, providing technical writing services to the chemical industry in West Virginia, Ohio and New Jersey; international employee coordinator at DuPont; and EEO program manager with the Internal Revenue Service.

She has a bachelor's degree from Assumption College and a master's degree in Public Administration from West Virginia University.

In the 1000 block of Avery Street in Parkersburg, there are 175 steps leading up to a small park and overlook at the top of Quincy Hill. A few years ago the existing stone stairs were crumbling and treacherous to climb. I was surprised when the city opted to restore these steps, as I wondered at the time whether the expense would be worthwhile. After all, when these stairs were rebuilt, who would use them? Since the reconstruction of the staircase, I've watched athletes test their endurance, sprinting up and down it. I've seen couples climb it together and small children chase up the steps, outrunning their parents. It's become a badge of honor to share with someone that you've scaled it. Occasionally now, I, too, use those steps and gain bragging rights.

For those who make the climb on a blue sky morning, after catching their breath at the top, the reward is a marvelous vista of communities on both sides of the Ohio River below. In early spring, before the trees gain their leaves, the sight is well worth the effort. Looking across Parkersburg into Belpre, one first notices a bright white church steeple; it pierces the sky and sets a reflective mood. From this angle, the present Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield headquarters looms large, blocking one's view of the flurry of construction activity on its new facility. One can see the rooftops of homes in the Julia-Ann Square Historic District, beckoning visitors to come and see the new arches marking the boundaries of this attractive, friendly neighborhood.

Some of Parkersburg's best assets aren't clearly visible. One's view of the Actor's Guild, Parkersburg Art Center, Smoot Theatre and the Oil and Gas and Blennerhassett Museums is obscured, but these organizations contribute such vitality to the community that one instinctively seeks their buildings. Both fine hospitals are evident, and Camden-Clark Memorial's new South Tower really sparkles. The green bridge connecting Parkersburg and Belpre stands out.



After years of anticipation, the new arch bridge on Corridor D-Route 50 appears nearly complete on the distant horizon. It's heartening to see so many promising signs of growth and strong evidence of significant investments of both human and financial capital.

Climbing a long, steep stairway is an apt metaphor for the nature of progress in our region. While sometimes it seems that we take two steps up and one back down, our goal remains constant and resolve steadfast, that each successive generation will see further and stand higher on that staircase than where we are right now. Just as one can't leap 175 steps at once, the pace of change here has been incremental as well. We've kept the faith and continued climbing even when the view has been unclear, coping with plant closings and waiting for bridges and highways that took years to arrive. We've learned not to expect major improvements overnight. We've anted up our own labor and resources and worked hard for our community's betterment. These lessons have taught us to continuously put our best efforts forward and to keep climbing, and over time we have gained strength and become more resilient and self-sufficient.

From this high vantage point, it's possible to envision many things. Boston College researchers Paul Schervish, Ph.D. and John Havens predict



The 175-step staircase to the park and overlook at the top of Quincy Hill.

that in less than 50 years time, by 2055, some \$41 trillion nationally will be passed from one generation to the next. It's estimated that a little under seven percent, about \$6 trillion, will be sent directly to charities. No one has projected the impact of this transfer locally, but there are clear signs that it is already underway. We've witnessed the sale of several businesses and, with one of them, the wonderful creation of a new philanthropic resource for charitable good.

Consider the possibilities for our shared future if more of the wealth that is

transferred remains here, invested into the communities from which it was earned. Among the best investments that any one of us ever can make are those that deliver a tangible, measurable return for the people we care about most, right here at home. I have cause for hope; I see leadership and action on many fronts: a new manufacturing site, riverfront park plans and a potential farmers' market, strong civic involvement and philanthropy on the rise. Volunteerism and philanthropy create a "tipping point" for communities, helping to shift perspectives as people become able to see their communities

as places of assets more so than needs, then generously step up to invest their own time, energy and resources for the common good.


Consider the possibilities. In fact, make an investment in them. Join us. Come climb these stairs and see a place where we are giving back and looking forward to a more promising future in the Mid-Ohio Valley. 

Photo courtesy of the Parkersburg Area Community Foundation.



Oil and Gas Industry Deeply Rooted in Mid-Ohio Valley

Denny Harton, President
GasSearch Corporation

Denny Harton is President of GasSearch Corporation, a producer/operator, and GasSearch Drilling Services Corporation, a drilling and service contractor, both based in Parkersburg, West Virginia. The company also has a regional office and shop facility in Hurricane, West Virginia and plans are underway to create a facility in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Harton began his career in the oil and gas industry in the mid-1970s in southwestern Virginia, working during the summers on a drilling rig for Union Drilling Company of Buckhannon, West Virginia. Following service in the US Navy, he returned to work in the industry and formed a consulting firm, Harton & Associates, before ultimately establishing GasSearch Corporation. The company grew from one well to hundreds, and in 2006 Mr. Harton formed GasSearch Drilling Services Corporation to provide rig, dozer, truck and other associated services.

Governor Cecil Underwood appointed Mr. Harton to the Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, where he served from 1999 to 2005.

He has been a member of the Independent Oil and Gas Association of West Virginia (IOGA) since 1988 and has served as the organization's vice president and president. He has been elected to its board of directors three times and held various leadership positions on the IOGA commerce committee.

He was honored with IOGA's 2003 Gunslinger Award for distinguished service. In 2006 he was chosen as the industry's Oil & Gas Man of the Year. He is a member of the board of directors of the Oil & Gas Museum in Parkersburg.

The Mid-Ohio Valley is rich with tradition, heritage and culture that is deeply rooted in the development of oil and gas underlying most of the land in West Virginia. While much of the traditional evidence of its existence is not as visible as the bygone years, there is significant development occurring throughout the state and in the Mid-Ohio Valley.

The fact that the Oil and Gas Museum is located in Wood County is no accident. Not far from here, in Burning Springs, the first known well was drilled and produced. The folks in Pennsylvania would argue that the first well was drilled by Colonel Drake himself, but we do not believe that is correct.

Dating back to before the Civil War, oil and gas helped build the Mid-Ohio Valley area into one of the largest economic regions in the state. The industry continues to have a significant economic impact on the overall economy of the state and the valley. Today, some 15,000 West Virginians are directly employed in the industry, with an aggregate payroll estimated to exceed \$1 billion.

The industry is expected to pay in excess of \$100 million in severance and other production-related taxes to the state and counties, monies that help budget-constrained school systems all over the Mountain State.

Once there were oil derricks and refineries up and down the Ohio River. Today there continues to be an abundance of factories that depend on the energy resources so abundant from beneath West Virginia.

Producing energy resources in West Virginia is challenging. While the mountains and valleys are beautiful, they present significant difficulty in accessing the mineral resources on which we all so vitally depend. Balancing our energy requirements with sound environmental practice

is the key to successful efforts to keep energy cost under control.

Our region – and the rest of West Virginia – will play a significant role in our nation's energy future. While there appears to be a substantial effort to move the nation to alternative fuels, it will be natural gas and coal that bridges the gap.

The most recent energy commodity prices make it possible for developers and producers to work harder than ever to develop the mineral resources necessary to meet the growing demand. Natural gas and coal are abundant in the Mountain State, and technology will enhance the ability to access more reserves.

There have been and will be efforts to change laws that govern the relationship between mineral owners and surface owners when the two tracts have been severed. Surface owners will need to recognize that they were able to purchase their land at a significant discount because the value of the land was reduced by the value of the mineral tract beneath it. When mineral tracts are owned, maintained and taxed to a separate mineral owner, then we all have to recognize the rights of the mineral owner to develop his property.

Because mineral interests are so capital intensive, most mineral development is performed in a commercial environment, while surface development often is completed by individual surface owners. Because of this difference, some have come to believe the commercial enterprises should bear an unfair burden to the surface owner. Not much consideration is given to the mineral owner when surface development impedes or curtails mineral development. There is a tremendous amount of mineral acreage sterilized by surface development without compensation to the mineral owner. Surface owners who want more control over how minerals are developed may also have to



The outside exhibit area of the Parkersburg Oil and Gas Museum features a Parkersburg pump jack (in operation) in the foreground and, in back, a Spencer Machine pump jack.

recognize that mineral owners may be entitled to more control over how the surface is developed if there is risk to the mineral estate.

The future will depend a great deal on how the political, judicial and environmental cultures evolve over time. The oil and gas industry, like all others in the state, is concerned about all of these things and is working hard to create efficiencies where they do not currently exist, while developing new techniques to enhance recovery in the most environmentally friendly way possible. The future from my perspective is bright, and to maintain the glow we must participate in the system and help ensure that those who regulate, legislate or judge what we do are fully informed and understand the industry's perspective to the fullest extent possible. ♾



GDS Rig #10, drilling for Cabot Oil & Gas.

Photos courtesy of GasSearch Corporation and the Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Mission Possible: Polymer Alliance Zone Seeks to Increase Jobs and Investment in West Virginia

Karen L. Facemyer, President
Polymer Alliance Zone®

Senator Karen Facemyer was hired as executive vice president of the Polymer Alliance Zone, Inc. (PAZ) in July 2006, and named president three months later. Her initial duties concentrate on building PAZ through its unique partnerships among businesses, education and government.

She was elected in 2000 as a member of the West Virginia State Senate, representing Jackson, Mason, Putnam and Roane counties. Her responsibilities in the Senate include addressing constituents' interests, legal research and analysis of issues including tax structure, infrastructure, business friendly environment and insurance. She serves on finance; transportation; agriculture; banking and insurance; and economic development committees.

In 2002 she was chosen as one of 40 emerging state leaders from across the nation to participate in the Henry Toll Fellowship leadership program, sponsored by the Council of State Governments. She was appointed as co-chair of the Agricultural & Rural Development Committee - Council of State Government in 2005, and named Legislator of the Year for the Vocational Technical Association in both West Virginia and the 13-state Southern District.

Ms. Facemyer previously served as a member of the West Virginia House of Delegates and taught school in Jackson and Mason counties in West Virginia and Meigs County, Ohio. She obtained her master's degree in vocational education administration from Marshall University and her undergraduate degree from Glenville State College.

Living the American dream in West Virginia... where else can a country girl from the Outback (Australia has nothing on us) become a West Virginia State Senator and president of the Polymer Alliance Zone?

In the northern part of Mason County, five miles inland from the Ohio River, is some of the most beautiful countryside you would ever want to see... It is West Virginia's Outback... Outback of New Haven, Outback of West Columbia, Outback of Mason... you get the picture. It is rural living at its best. Family, church, work and community are the basics of life and teach the foundation by which we live and work today. I was very active growing up – church youth group, 4-H, Wahama Band, basketball and softball – along with my sisters, brother and a mom whom was just as active.

Through participating and being involved with my family then and now, organizations, my education and work ethic helped me achieve the privilege of becoming president of a nationally known non-profit corporation. The Polymer Alliance Zone (PAZ) originated in 1996 under an executive order of Governor Gaston Caperton, with the mission to increase jobs and investment in the state. Governor Caperton targeted specific segments of our economy primed for growth and expansion with PAZ being the first of what would soon be several zones to follow. Jackson, Mason and Wood Counties make up the zone, recognized as one of the world's largest concentrations of high-value polymers production with both land and demographics to support further proliferation of the industry. Opportunities to promote West Virginia and PAZ have been abundant in just my short tenure as president, with new and expanding companies announced each year.

Polymer companies have been located in the Mid-Ohio Valley for the abundant natural resources needed for production. Through the collective

efforts of our stakeholders in PAZ, we envision the expansion of our industrial base by adding multiple values to polymer businesses and related service companies, thus increasing quality job opportunities for West Virginians.

Nationally, as well as locally, the media regularly report on new milestones as they are reached by the baby boomer generation. Currently that milestone is retirement. Thoughts immediately go to rest, relaxation, vacationing, hobbies and visiting with the grandchildren. Not so if you are managing a plant in the manufacturing business. Polymer companies, both large and small, are starting to feel the pinch of replacing that baby boomer generation. PAZ, through meetings with company representatives, education and training groups is making sure we are ready to provide the training and teach the skills needed to work in our industry.

"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal." That's how Henry Ford summed it up and that's the approach we are taking at PAZ. Our goal is to make sure that we have an ample supply of skilled workers utilizing our educational partners. The days of companies hiring workers and providing in-house training are over. Companies want to choose from applicants that have a good work ethic, are educated and skilled for a specific craft and are drug-free, to name just a few of the important qualifications.

We know our mission. We will continue to look and listen, to achieve the goals that PAZ originally outlined in 1996, and in this global economy – with technology at our fingertips – we will continue to learn, set and reach for new goals. Living the American dream in the Mid-Ohio Valley has a very promising future for current and future generations of Mountaineers. ▽

Photos courtesy of the Polymer Alliance Zone.



The Polymer Alliance Zone's trade show booth and staff travel the world to promote the organization's capabilities. In the photo below, taken at the K Plastic Trade Show in Düsseldorf, Germany, Karen Facemyer (second from left) is joined by William R. Timken, Jr., US Ambassador to Germany (third from right), West Virginia Commerce Secretary Kelley Goes, (third from left), Sven Gerzer of the Development Office and members of the Ambassador's staff.





Take Me Home, Country Roads, In a Hino Truck!

Joseph P. Chronley
Hino Motors Manufacturing USA, Inc.

Joseph Chronley is the general manager for the new Hino final assembly plant in Williamstown, West Virginia. Mr. Chronley previously was part of the senior management team responsible for the start-up of a manufacturing facility supporting a Toyota Tundra plant in San Antonio, Texas, as well as a member of two other start-up teams, in Indiana and California.

He has more than 20 years of experience in manufacturing, and holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Indiana Wesleyan University. An avid outdoorsman, he is excited about the opportunities offered by his new Mountain State home.

Hino Motors Manufacturing USA, Inc. (HMM) landed in Williamstown, West Virginia, less than one year ago, and it already feels like a generations-old family home. We have been so fortunate to have the deep commitment of Governor Manchin, Senator Rockefeller, Representative Mollohan, the West Virginia Development Office, the Wood County Development Authority and, most importantly, the citizens of the greater Williamstown, Vienna, Parkersburg and Marietta area. As our colleagues from Japan would say, "Domo Arigato!"

As some readers may not be aware, HMM is a Toyota Group Company, engaged in two primary lines of business in the United States: value added production and precision assembly of Class 4 through 7 commercial trucks; and a Tier One supplier to Toyota of axle and suspension components for the Tundra, Tacoma and Sequoia.

The HMM facility in Williamstown is one of just two Hino commercial truck facilities in the U.S., and the only one that is wholly owned and operated by Hino. Perhaps more interesting, the HMM Williamstown plant is the ONLY transportation equipment assembly facility in all of West Virginia.

So, how does Japan's largest commercial truck and bus company end up in the Mid-Ohio Valley – taking over the vacant plant once occupied by Walker Systems? Well, it certainly does not hurt that Toyota has had a successful engine manufacturing facility in Buffalo, West Virginia, for more than a decade. And, we were persuaded by a host of elected and economic development officials, including Senator Rockefeller, Governor Manchin, the West Virginia Development Office and Wood County officials, to locate our manufacturing facility in Williamstown.

But this is just where our story begins.

We have found in the Mid-Ohio Valley a great workforce, work ethic, sense of community, and of pride. Indeed, many tenets of our goals and values as a company are reflected in our team members and the local communities from which they came.

We are proud of our Corporate Mission:

To make the world a better place to live by helping people and goods get where they need to go – safely and economically – while focusing on sustainable development.

And our Core Principles, in support of the Corporate Mission include, among others:

- Develop and maintain innovative technologies that enable us to provide customers with useful products and services.
- Integrate sustainability, social concern and a keen awareness of change into our plans for growth.
- Respect the diversity of our employees, and build a vibrant corporate culture.

This mission and these principles are embodied by our team members both in the work they do for Hino and, we believe, in their personal ethics outside of Hino. As a company, our team members in Williamstown produce a wonderfully safe and impressively economical commercial truck. In fact, with regard to the latter, certain studies indicate that Hino Trucks achieve fuel economy rates up to 15 percent higher than our competitor's similar models



Tomofumi Suenaga, plant manager, and Joseph Chronley, general manager, with finished commercial trucks outside the Hino West Virginia plant in Williamstown.



Inspections throughout the assembly process ensure quality and customer satisfaction.



Our team members in all our facilities are rigorously trained in methods and processes deemed to be environmentally responsible and sustainable. Indeed, Hino's facility in Ontario, California, recently achieved ISO 14001 Certification – the international standard for environmental management systems. We expect the Williamstown plant will achieve this impressive milestone in the not too far off future.

While we appreciate our team members' adherence to and belief in our Corporate Mission while they are "on the job", we are more proud that they have adopted and embraced this same spirit in their everyday lives. Our team members have involved themselves in a host of community improvement projects, including:

- Partners in Education with the Williamstown Elementary School
 - > 15 team members have volunteered to provide afternoon tutoring to students in fourth, fifth and sixth grades
 - > 13 team members volunteered for the annual PTA Fundraising Carnival
 - > Many team members and their families collected box tops and provided baked goods for fund raising.
- The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life
 - > Team members are raising money by selling raffle tickets, participating in bake sales, etc. Team members will participate in the Relay itself as well.
- American Red Cross Blood Drive
 - > About 50 percent of the Williamstown plant participated
 - > Many team members donated for the first time.

It is pretty clear . . . Hino has assembled a strong team with a give-back attitude in Williamstown, just as we did at our sister facilities in Marion, Arkansas, Ontario, California, and Farmington Hills, Michigan. All of us are committed to Hino Japan's admirable and stringent goals for Corporate Social Responsibility, including environmental responsibility.

On behalf of HMM's President, Yasuo Tanigawa, and all of our colleagues at the Hino West Virginia plant, we look forward to continued growth, success, and good corporate citizenship in the Mid-Ohio Valley. ▽

Photos courtesy of Hino Motors Manufacturing USA, Inc.



Location and Workforce are Key Assets for Mid-Ohio Valley

Keith Burdette, President
Parkersburg Area Roundtable

Keith Burdette is the president of the Parkersburg Area Roundtable, the economic development group for the Parkersburg-Wood County area, and the managing partner of the Burdette Group, a Parkersburg-based company that specializes in government relations and development strategic planning.

Prior to forming the Burdette Group in 2003, Keith was a member of Governor Bob Wise's senior staff, serving as his senior assistant for policy and legislative affairs. Keith served two terms in the West Virginia House of Delegates and three terms in the West Virginia State Senate. From 1989 to 1995, he served as the State Senate President. He serves as a member of the board of directors of the Polymer Alliance Zone, the Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council and the Erickson All-Sports Complex.

The Parkersburg Area Roundtable was created to organize and foster economic growth in Wood County. Comprised of three different but inter-related organizations that play a vital role in the retention and creation of jobs, the Area Roundtable promotes investments in the Mid-Ohio Valley community.

When Hino Motors decided to locate its first commercial truck assembly plant in the United States in Williamstown, West Virginia, last June, it was safe to say that those of us who live in the Mid-Ohio Valley had learned more about ourselves than we had taught Hino about us.

The Mid-Ohio Valley discovered that it could compete for major economic development projects if simply given a fair opportunity to compete. However, competing required us to identify those unique resources that set us apart from other locations rather than those we had in common.

Yes, it was about location, but it was also about the ease of using that location to move a product across the country.

Yes, it was about the available workforce, but it was also about the work ethic of that workforce and its ability to respond to specific training.

Yes, it was about quality of life, but it was also about the willingness of a community to embrace a company from a different culture and with sometimes unique expectations.

Time after time, two components set us apart: location and workforce.

With two-thirds of the population of the United States within overnight delivery of a site in Wood County, our location is very attractive. Interstate 77 and the new U.S. Route 50 give ground transportation ideal north-south and east-west corridors. The Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Airport provides a direct link to Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C. and one-stop access to cities across the globe. CSX provides rail service and the Ohio and Little Kanawha Rivers provide barge access for companies doing business in the area. Clearly, while we are ideally located, what was more important was that our transportation system provided accessible market access from our location.





Early construction of the \$120 million, tied-arch Blennerhassett Island Bridge, which is expected to open to traffic this summer.



The Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Airport provides a direct link to Dulles International Airport in Washington, D. C. and one-stop access to cities across the globe.



The Coldwater Creek distribution center, located in Mineral Wells, West Virginia.



Interstate 77 and the new U.S. Route 50 give ground transportation ideal north-south and east-west corridors.

When Hino began recruiting for the first 80 jobs, over 4,000 people applied within two weeks. While that is significant in and of itself, more important is the fact that 3,700 of those applicants were pre-qualified to be considered for jobs which required solid hand-eye coordination and skills adaptable to a detail-driven assembly operation.

So, while we certainly have an available workforce, the real selling point for our area was our ability to provide employers with a dependable workforce that is trained or trainable, who could produce a superior product. Joe Chronley, the general manager of Hino's Williamstown plant, said that he had been involved in four different plant start-ups across the country and, without

question, the Williamstown start-up was the most successful because of our workforce. People who live in the Mid-Ohio Valley typically love it here and are proud of their community. It shows in many ways. While we were quick to show off our schools, hospitals, parks and neighborhoods, it was our willingness to embrace a company from a different country with a different culture that became most important. We had given little thought to how receptive the community would be to its first Japanese company, but it was clearly an issue on the minds of Hino's executives. Within hours of the announcement, however, officials from Hino were being greeted on city streets and in local restaurants by people who expressed their excitement and appreciation for this

new investment in our community. This welcoming environment provided the final stamp of approval for company executives that sealed the deal.

The Mid-Ohio Valley is blessed with many unique assets. How we use those assets is the key to our growth and ability to attract new investment to the area. If the lessons we learned during the recruitment of Hino are illustrative, we are definitely poised to compete and future opportunities for our region are great. ▽

Photos courtesy of the Parkersburg Area Roundtable.



Company Culture Values Customers, Associates and Communities

Gerard El Chaar, Senior Vice President, Operations
Coldwater Creek

Gerard El Chaar was promoted to senior vice president of operations for Coldwater Creek in January 2005, where he is responsible for operations at the company's West Virginia Distribution Center, as well as call centers in West Virginia and North Idaho and the company's retail outlet stores. He served as vice president of operations starting in 2002 and, prior to that, as director, and then divisional vice president, of distribution since October 2000. Prior to joining Coldwater Creek, he was senior director of international operations for eToys Inc., where he was responsible for customer service and distribution in the United Kingdom and Belgium.

He received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and a master's degree in industrial engineering, both from Lehigh University. He is a member of the Business School Advisory Board at WVU Parkersburg and a member and executive officer of the Area Roundtable/Parkersburg Wood County Development Corporation.



Coldwater Creek began in 1984 as a home business with only one phone, an extra-long cord, a closet filled with merchandise and a fierce determination to set new standards for mail order service. As the orders started flowing in, it wasn't long until the small operation needed to expand. The company moved to a 20-acre campus in Sandpoint, Idaho, surrounded by broad mountain vistas. Specializing in women's apparel, jewelry and gifts, Coldwater Creek has grown tremendously in the past 24 years!

In the late 1990s, founder and then chief executive officer, Dennis Pence, started the search for a distribution and customer contact center location on the East Coast. Several states were considered, but West Virginia, with its beautiful landscapes and willingness to do business, prevailed over the other states vying for the growing business. The East Coast Operations Center in Mineral Wells, just outside Parkersburg, West Virginia, started production in 1998 at a temporary location and moved into the current facility during the summer of 1999. The Contact and Distribution Centers focused on the customer from the beginning, making the experience feel like shopping with a good friend.

For customers, shopping with the company became even more personal as retail stores were added into the mix in the late 1990s. The Cedar Street Bridge in Sandpoint, Idaho was the inaugural

store, catering to the baby boomer population that spent summers in this northwestern vacation spot. Coldwater Creek now has over 300 retail stores across the country, including one in the Charleston Town Center Mall in Charleston, West Virginia, employing about 15 associates. Coldwater Creek also serves customers through its e-commerce website at www.coldwatercreek.com.

With over 13,000 employees across the country and about 800 of those at the West Virginia Operations facility, retaining the best talent is essential. Contact Center specialists, receiving, pick, pack, returns and shipping associates make up the majority of the West Virginia staff. In addition, information technology, supply chain, inventory control, human resources and operations support staff diligently work to exceed our customers' expectations, while caring for the teams that make it all possible.

Coldwater Creek is more than just a place to work. It's a place of belonging. Engaged, contributing employees express genuine care for the customers and each other. How does Coldwater Creek take such good care of its employees? First, each employee is given the opportunity to train and advance within the company. This is accomplished by cross-training all employees in several different areas of the business. Eventually each person finds a home that fits and gains a greater understanding



Clockwise from upper left: Employees respond immediately to customer requests in the call center; Recent Coldwater Creek catalogs; sorting bins in the order fulfillment section of the distribution warehouse; Coldwater Creek employees have access to both cardio and strength training equipment in the fitness center.

of the overall process — how each individual part affects the whole.

Coldwater Creek offers its employees an attractive benefits package, including paid health premiums for each full-time associate, vision and dental plans, 401K, flex spending, life insurance, employee stock purchase plan, employee assistance program and a benefit package for part-time associates. Meeting each associate's needs doesn't stop there. The on-site wellness program includes healthy choices in the café, an on-site employee fitness center and programs organized by the full-time on-site nurse, Susi Gilmore, MS, RN, to screen blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and body mass index. The fitness center offers cardio and weight training equipment, as well as instructor-led classes at various times of the day and evening to accommodate all schedules. The employee fitness center is free of charge to employees and their significant other.

Employees with a sense of purpose make great contributors to the communities in which they live. Coldwater Creek enthusiastically supports the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure® as a national series sponsor. Nearly every person has been touched by a family member, friend or co-worker with breast cancer, and employees are passionate about helping to find a cure.

Coldwater Creek is giving back in another way by offsetting 100 percent of its energy consumption with renewable energy certificates. In 2006, Coldwater Creek converted to wind-generated electricity to power the Sandpoint headquarters, the West Virginia Operations facility, contact centers, and retail stores across the nation. Through this commitment, support for the burgeoning renewable energy market is provided, encouraging its growth and helping to lessen our country's dependence on fossil fuels. This decision affects communities across the country and the

world, and everyone at the Creek is proud of this contribution.

Additionally, the leadership team at the West Virginia Operations facility remains active on state and local boards, including Workforce Investment Board, WVU at Parkersburg, Boys and Girls Club, Area Roundtable and the Local School Improvement Council for Mineral Wells Elementary, our Partner in Education.

The Coldwater Creek culture of Respect for the Customer, Respect for Each Other and Respect for The Brand is beautifully illustrated by the daily interactions with customers, the care shown to each associate and the overall responsibility to the communities which Coldwater Creek serves. ▽



The Community's College, A Regional Advantage

Dr. Marie Foster Gnage, President
West Virginia University at Parkersburg

Marie Foster Gnage became the sixth president of West Virginia University at Parkersburg in July 2004. In addition to serving as president of the Parkersburg campus, she also is a regional vice president of West Virginia University. Prior to assuming the presidency, she served in a number of key administrative roles at colleges in Florida, Arizona and New Jersey.

Currently, she serves as a member of the St. Joseph's Hospital Board of Trustees, the Parkersburg Art Center Board of Trustees, the Workforce Investment Board, the American Association of Community Colleges Commission on Academic, Student and Community Development and the Presidents Academy Executive Committee, the Black Diamond Girl Scout Council Board, the Economic Roundtable of Ohio Valley Directors and The Huntington National Bank West Virginia Board of Directors. Her most recent publication is "Reconfiguring Self: A Matter of Place in Selected Novels by Paul Marshall," in *Middle Passages and the Healing Place of History: Migration and Identity in Black Women's Literature*, The Ohio University Press (2006).

She received the *Empowerment Inspiration Award* given by the West Virginia Minority Business Development Center and the *Women of Excellence Award for Trail Blazing* awarded by Altrusa International, Inc.

There is no doubt that a college makes a major contribution to the local economy. By addressing the community's educational and training needs, a college advances the citizens' skills and thus improves the overall standard of living for the community. When the college is a regional institution, a community and technical college, *and* a regional campus with ties to a premier university, the economic contribution is even broader. More individuals within the service area are able to earn associate, baccalaureate and master's degrees, thus increasing their skills and competencies, and business and industry is assured workforce development for incumbent and prospective workers.

West Virginia University at Parkersburg (WVUP) is uniquely poised to address the educational and training needs of the seven West Virginia counties in the Mid-Ohio Valley assigned as its service region, as well as those of its extended service area—five bordering counties included in the reciprocity agreement with the Ohio Board of Regents.

What makes this regional college important academically and economically to the Mid-Ohio Valley? WVUP is a comprehensive community and technical college with offerings that include certificates, two-year degrees and noncredit courses/programs for workforce development and enrichment, and it offers four-year degrees. West Virginia legislation labels it a higher education center. Perhaps it is the strong community college mission in action that makes those it serves label it as an "opportunity for higher education." WVUP is the community's college. Because the college is here and offers the variety of educational experiences—liberal arts and technical—the chance for a more educated citizenry in the Mid-Ohio Valley and in the State of West Virginia increases, and impacts the socio-economic status of those served.

It is the combination of educational opportunities, quality programs, accessibility and affordable price that makes it the regional college of choice in the

Mid-Ohio Valley, as seen in the enrollment of almost 4,000 students in the academic/technical programs and over 2,000 in noncredit workforce development programs. In addition, West Virginia University offers master's degree programs in business administration and communications on the WVUP campus.

Students of any age can achieve their goals and dreams at West Virginia University at Parkersburg (Parkersburg Campus and Jackson County Center). The Caperton Center for Applied Technology, a partnership with Wood County Public Schools, makes it possible for college and high school students to share the same building, and quite often classrooms, as they are prepared in technical fields requiring the use of computer technology. More young people are choosing to come to their regional college right out of high school. These recent graduates and their parents see the advantage of remaining at home, attending WVUP with many of the same choices of programs to be found at two- and four-year colleges elsewhere, and avoiding major expenditures and/or loans for a college education. The reciprocity agreement with the Ohio Board of Regents expands those options.

Efforts with adults are continuously reviewed because of the number of target groups for enrollment—including veterans, retention and workforce preparation. The Board of Governors' Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Applied Science (Technical Studies, Occupational Studies), Bachelor of Applied Technology, and the Regents' Bachelor of Arts are all adult-friendly degree programs because apprenticeships, credentials and documented experience can be combined with college course work for the achievement of the degrees. Adults can continue working while pursuing the degree, whether onsite—which is within reasonable driving distance—or online. They also find the opportunity to upgrade and learn new skills in a noncredit environment quite to their liking.



The College Activities Center at West Virginia University at Parkersburg.


Partnership with business and industry and with organizations that support workforce development is an essential component of being the community's college. Certainly, the college's goal as it focuses on recruitment and enrollment of high school and adult students alike is to help to ensure that employers in the region have an educated workforce. WVUP also provides customized training for business and industry as needed and requested. Workforce development and technical program grants from the West Virginia Community and Technical College system office enable the college to offer both just-in-time training and educational programs to meet needs identified by employers. Ninety-day fast track training programs allow individuals seeking more profitable entry level positions to prepare for work quickly.

The Mid-Ohio Valley is fortunate to have four higher education institutions: WVUP and Washington State Community College (OH) share the West Virginia/Ohio education reciprocity agreement; Ohio Valley University (WV) is able to offer participation in the WVUP Nursing



The Caperton Center for Applied Technology offers the best the region has to offer in instruction and training for those interested in the challenges of sophisticated technology careers.

program to a select number of its students; and students from WVUP may take advantage of scholarship and program articulation opportunities at Marietta College (OH).

As a regional college/higher education center, WVUP is uniquely positioned to meet the credit and non-credit workforce development needs of the region served. 

Photos courtesy of West Virginia University at Parkersburg.



Tourism: It's Everybody's Business

Steven W. Nicely, President & CEO
Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau

Steven W. Nicely is President and CEO of the Greater Parkersburg Convention & Visitors Bureau, an independent, nonprofit corporation dedicated to strengthening the region's economy by marketing Greater Parkersburg as a destination for leisure travel, group tours, meetings and conventions.

Mr. Nicely has served as the President and CEO of the Greater Parkersburg CVB since its inception in 1985. Prior to that, he was the executive director of the Country Roads Travel Council and a teacher within the Wood County School system.

A graduate of Marshall University, Mr. Nicely is an active member of the community, serving as treasurer for the West Virginia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus and a member of the Fort Boreman Historical Park Commission. In the past, he has served on the board of directors for the West Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, Mountain State Art and Craft Fair, West Virginia Interstate Fair and Exposition, Parkersburg Homecoming Festival and Blennerhassett Historical Foundation.

A flourishing tourism industry is important to everyone, even those not directly involved. It means a better quality of life, a better place to live and work and a better place to do business.

When people in West Virginia think of industries, they generally think of manufacturing, mining, agriculture, etc. Few think of tourism. Yet millions of individuals across the nation – and more than 80,000 people right here in West Virginia – are employed, either full- or part-time, by tourism businesses.

Tourism in Wood County accounts for 5,571 jobs and \$294.3 million in direct/indirect revenues. Studies by the West Virginia Division of Tourism consistently rank Wood County as one of the highest in the state in terms of expenditures by visitors.

Everyone benefits from tourism, since dollars spent by visitors eventually reach all segments of the community – through salaries, supplies, services and other purchases by tourism businesses and their employees. Furthermore, attractions, recreational facilities and other tourism businesses built for visitors can also be enjoyed by local residents.

For nearly 25 years, the Greater Parkersburg Convention & Visitors Bureau has partnered with regional tourism and non-tourism businesses, organizations and events to promote and further enhance regional attractions, sites, shops, restaurants, lodging and outdoor recreational opportunities.

New attractions and businesses are opening and under development throughout the Greater



Fenton Art Glass Company, Williamstown, West Virginia.



Third Street Deli & Catering, Downtown Parkersburg.

Parkersburg area. In 2007 Parkersburg celebrated the long-awaited opening of Fort Boreman Historical Park and a new 86-room Holiday Inn Express Inn & Suites in Mineral Wells. In addition, national retailer Coldwater Creek opened its only Clearance Center in the country in Mineral Wells. The center is a tremendous draw and offers shoppers up to 70 percent off brand-name women's apparel, jewelry, accessories and home furnishings.


On the horizon, the Corridor D project, connecting West Virginia and Ohio with a new



View from Fort Boreman Historic Park.

Route 50 bridge, will be completed this year – opening up travel routes through each state. Work also will begin this summer on the new Point Park riverfront project in downtown Parkersburg. Once complete, the park will serve as a unique outdoor venue for a variety of activities.

Finally, area businesses and organizations will partner on September 20 for the third annual Taste of Parkersburg event in downtown Parkersburg. More than 3,000 people savored the flavor of Parkersburg with food, wine, entertainment and artisans last year and the crowd is expected to double in 2008.

Through a strong and effective team of leaders, Greater Parkersburg continues to be a destination of choice for leisure travelers, tour groups, meetings, conventions and sporting events. 

Photos courtesy of the Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau.

TOURISM TRIVIA

Did You Know that travel and tourism is a \$1.6 trillion industry in the United States?

Did You Know that travel and tourism generates \$110 billion in tax revenue for local, state and federal governments?

Did You Know that each U.S. household would pay \$995 more in taxes without the tax revenue generated by the travel and tourism industry?

Did You Know that the travel and tourism industry is one of the country's largest employers, with 7.5 million direct travel-generated jobs?

Did You Know that direct travel-generated payroll totals \$178 billion and that one out of every eight U.S. non-farm jobs is created directly, indirectly or is induced by travel and tourism?

Did You Know that dining is the most popular domestic trip activity and is included in 31 percent of all domestic trips? Shopping is the number one leisure/recreational activity for overseas visitors.

Did You Know that approximately 2.8 million hotel room nights are sold every day in the United States?

Source: TIA.org



Sense of Community Drives Success

Richard M. Adams, Jr., President
United Bank, Inc.

Richard M. (Rick) Adams, Jr. is president of United Bank, Inc., the lead banking franchise of United Bankshares, Inc. (UBSI), and executive vice president of United Bankshares, Inc. UBSI is a multi-state bank holding company doing business in Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC. UBSI is currently the 59th largest banking company in the nation and is West Virginia's largest publicly traded company. United Bank, Inc. is located in West Virginia and Ohio, with 55 locations and more than 1,000 employees.

Rick also is responsible for wealth management activities for all UBSI subsidiary banks. Wealth management lines of business include asset management, trust (personal, corporate, and employee benefit), brokerage (his licenses include 7, 24, and 65) and investment advisory services. In addition, he oversees all UBSI litigation matters.

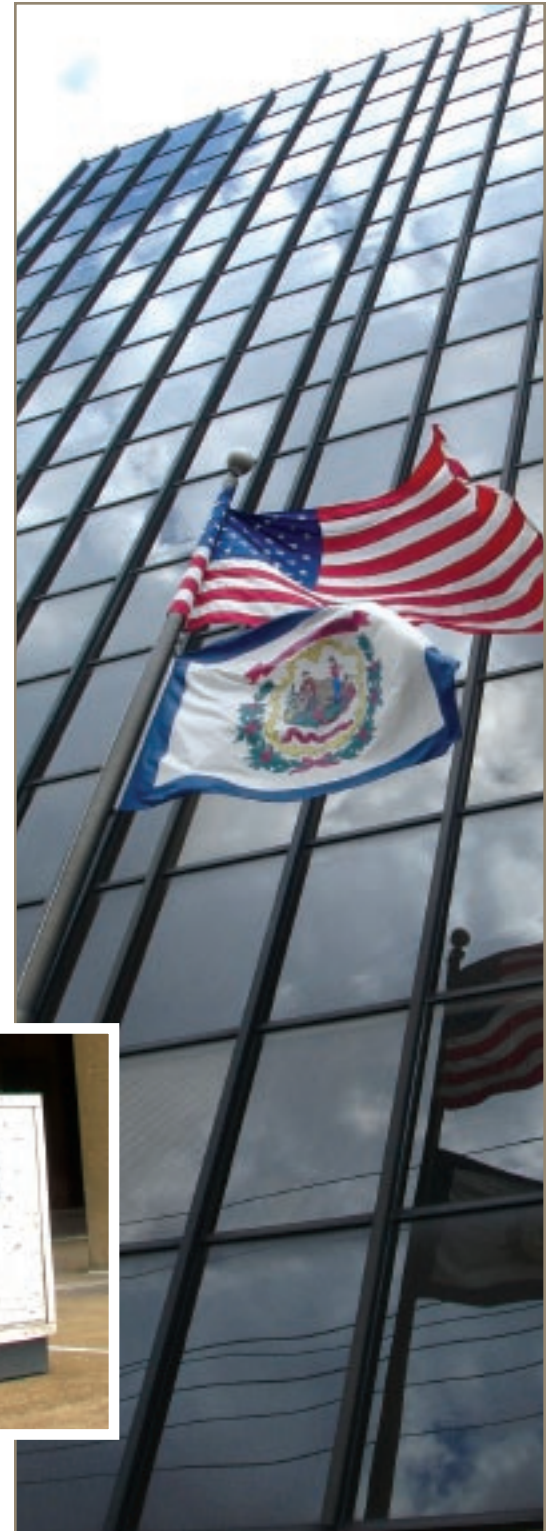
Rick is the chair-elect of the West Virginia Bankers Association, a board member of Vision Shared, Inc., and a past chairman of the West Virginia Bankers Trust Division. He is a member of Young Presidents' Organization and a member of the WV State Bar Association. Additionally, he is an adjunct professor at West Virginia University-Parkersburg, where he teaches Business Law and serves on several local charitable and community development boards in his hometown of Parkersburg.

He received his undergraduate degree from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida and his law degree from Washington and Lee University School of Law in Lexington, Virginia.

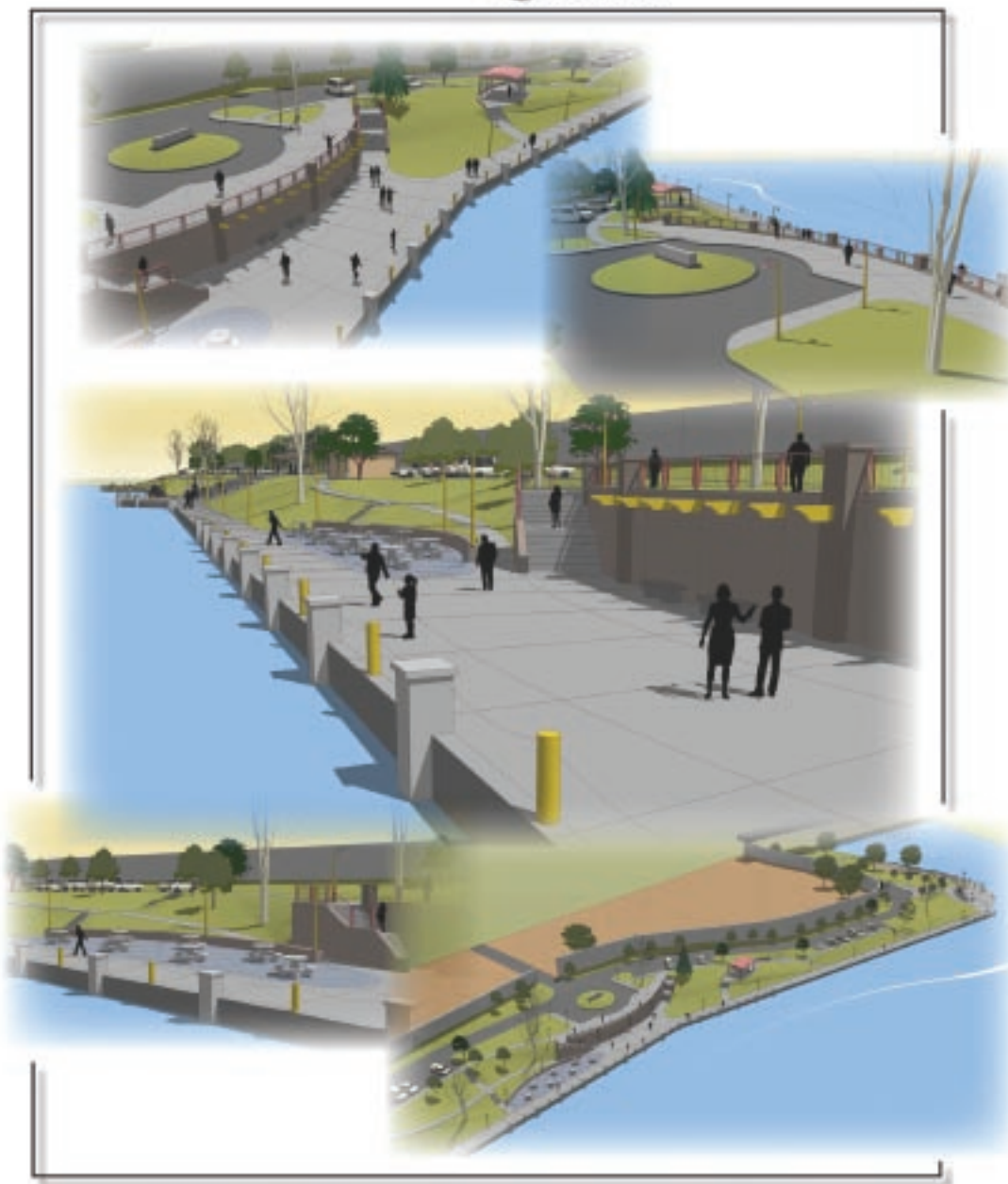
I don't need to pore over data or review reports to know that good things are happening here in the Mid-Ohio Valley. All I have to do is look out the window. An office on the top floor of Parkersburg's tallest building affords a unique perspective from which to view the area and all that is happening.

From a quick look to the left out of my window, I see in the foreground the Blennerhassett Hotel, which has benefited from a significant investment from a local entrepreneur and which has been extensively remodeled. Beyond the hotel, it's impossible not to notice the newly constructed building that houses employees from the Bureau of Public Debt. Public Debt now occupies three buildings downtown and employs nearly two thousand individuals, including large numbers of finance and accounting jobs.

Out past the Public Debt buildings is the convergence of the Little Kanawha and Ohio Rivers, which is the site of a new \$10 million riverfront park that is scheduled to see construction begin this summer (see artist's rendering on page 21). As I lift my gaze slightly, I notice the busy traffic on the new Route 50 section of Corridor D, which I follow out in the distance to the nearly completed \$120 million bridge spanning the Ohio River and connecting West Virginia and Ohio.



Entrance & Overlook



Artist's rendering of the entrance and overlook of Riverfront Park in Parkersburg, West Virginia.

Scanning back to my right I see the \$56 million Camden-Clark Memorial Hospital expansion and, next door to the bank, cranes signal that work has begun on the new \$27 million headquarters for Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield. Further up the river, I see the city's new \$50 million wastewater treatment plant. Past that in the distance is the hustle and bustle of the Grand Central Avenue area in Vienna, which seems to continuously sprout new restaurants, hotels and businesses.

So there are lots of positive things underway here – and those are just the ones I can see without getting out of my chair. We have contributions from both the private and the public sector, and we benefit from a good mix of investment in business and job creation, as well as necessary infrastructure. Each of these projects is an individual success story, and collectively they represent the positive direction of the Mid-Ohio Valley.

Our success here can be attributed to many factors, including our location, our workforce, our infrastructure and our schools and community resources. We have the processes in place to provide necessary information to potential investors, and there is a high level of coordination between the various stakeholders interested in economic development.

While all of these factors are integral components of success, there is a special sense of community here in the Mid-Ohio Valley that is the “X factor” which brings everything together. This special sense of community manifests itself in greater commitment, stronger leadership and better cooperation among the parties responsible for the future of the area. Government at the city, county, state and federal levels, along with area development groups, local corporations and individual business leaders all work hard for the common good of the area.

At our company, we recognize, appreciate and embrace the responsibility for the futures of the communities we serve. We lend our expertise to creatively structure deals. We make significant financial contributions. We allocate the time and effort of our employees, and we leverage our many relationships to help facilitate transactions. We share and foster this special sense of community that drives success and binds us together with our neighbors here in the Mid-Ohio Valley and across West Virginia. ▽



Leadership for a Global Society

Dr. Jean A. Scott, President
Marietta College

Before arriving at Marietta College, Dr. Jean Scott was the President of Bradford College in Haverhill, Massachusetts. She is an historian by training. A graduate of the University of Richmond, President Scott earned a master of arts and Ph.D. in history at Harvard University. She began her career as assistant professor of history at Duke, then became the Director of Undergraduate Admission there.

She continued her work in admission and enrollment management, serving as dean of admission at Case Western Reserve University and the College of William and Mary. She gained experience in planning, affirmative action, academic administration and student affairs as associate provost at William and Mary, vice president for enrollment and student services at SUNY Potsdam and president of Bradford College.

She was appointed the 17th president of Marietta College on July 15, 2000. Her experience as an enrollment manager and her research on the admission process has been the focus of her publications and presentations. She received the Duke Endowment Teaching Award (1979) and the Duke Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award (1978).

Higher education in the United States has three distinct and related purposes. First, it prepares students for personal and professional success. Parents who sacrifice to pay for higher education take comfort in the knowledge that it is the best investment they can make in their son's or daughter's future professional success and earning power.

Second, higher education has a responsibility to prepare informed citizens who will be leaders in their communities. That is the reason federal and state governments provide billions of dollars in financial aid for students. Thomas Jefferson eloquently articulated the connection between education and our democracy, writing "that nation that expects to be ignorant and free, wants what never was and never will be."

A third purpose is to prepare graduates to live and work in a global society. The publication of Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat* in 2005 intensified our national conversation about the need to prepare students to interact successfully with emerging economic giants such as China and India as technology changes the competitive landscape, making time and place largely irrelevant to the production of many goods and services. These new realities of the early twenty-first century demand both a continuation of longstanding programs in higher education and initiatives to change the ways in which students view their world.

An international focus in higher education is not new. Most colleges, including Marietta College, have created curricula that prepare students for life in a global society and environments in which students from different backgrounds, religions, races and nationalities learn from each other. We have developed exchange agreements that bring faculty members and students from many countries to the United States, and we have sent students abroad for life-changing academic experiences.

We need to do more. In creating Vision 2020, the College's conceptual framework for planning for the next decade and a half, Marietta College faculty, administrators and trustees committed the College to an increased focus on globalization, one of the issues that will challenge our students for decades to come. That is consistent with the College's history and with best practice throughout higher education. While we will continue to nurture our relationships with universities in many other countries, including Brazil, Thailand and Korea, and provide broad opportunities for our students, we will expand our focus on our China program.

The commitment of a small college in the Mid-Ohio Valley to invest time and resources to deepen our connections with a country that is both an economic rival and a representative of very different political and cultural ideals may seem disrespectful of the concerns of our region, but we see it as just the opposite. To visit China, understand the demographic and economic realities there, and observe the work patterns of our Chinese alumni is to understand that we owe it to our students to help them build the knowledge and the relationships that will prepare them both to compete and cooperate with their Chinese counterparts. Their personal futures and the long-term success of our region and our country demand no less.

Over the past two decades, Marietta College has developed a focus on China. United States Department of Education grants have made it possible to hire Chinese faculty members in political science and Chinese language and to provide summer workshops for our faculty members in Marietta, then in China, to prepare them to infuse material about China into the curriculum. We expect, over the next decade or so, to enhance our academic offerings in Chinese and Asian studies to attract more American students interested in learning about China,



benefiting from contacts with Chinese nationals here, and ultimately studying in China. These enhancements will ensure that all of our students are affected by our global, specifically Chinese, connections and perspectives.

The China connection also involves outreach, beginning with the work of full-time Marietta College faculty and staff members in China who recruited the 84 Chinese students enrolled at the College this year. Marietta College is one of the few colleges in the United States to enroll significant numbers of undergraduate Chinese students, and we have succeeded because we have built connections with families, government officials and schools over the years. The Marietta College

Choir's visit to China in 2006, as well as the individual students who enroll at Chinese universities, strengthen those connections. The College annually hosts visiting faculty members from the University of International Relations in Beijing. Under the aegis of the Marietta College China Institute and with the support of the Chinese government, groups of Chinese officials as diverse as economics translators and college administrators have come to Marietta for training programs. Partners within the greater Marietta community serve as mentor families to students and advisors to the Institute's visitors. In the process, they develop contacts halfway across the world, building a basis for international understanding and partnerships that may last for a lifetime.

Marietta College has made a conscious decision to move strongly in a direction that our history, dating back to the hiring of a Chinese economics professor in 1948, makes possible. We act today to fulfill the promise of higher education in the Mid-Ohio Valley. We understand that the stakes are high for our students and for our society as we produce leaders to meet the challenges of tomorrow's global society. ▾

Photos courtesy of Marietta College.



Transparency in Local Government: Technology is the Answer

David Blair Couch, Commissioner
Wood County Commission

David Blair Couch is the president of A.W. Couch, Inc., a Hertz rental licensee with locations in Parkersburg, Bluefield and Lewisburg, West Virginia, and Marietta, Ohio. The company was founded in 1948.

Mr. Couch was elected to a six-year term on the Wood County Commission in 2007. He is president of the Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Airport and a member of the board of directors for several organizations, including the Wood County Airport Authority, the Local Emergency Planning Committee, the Wood County Extension Office, Wood County Community Corrections and WVCorp, County Liability Risk Pool. He is a commissioner of the Wood County Parks and Recreation Commission and a committee member of the David A. Couch ALS Golf Tournament, named in honor of his late father. He serves as chair of both the PAC Wood County School Levy and School Bond.

He attended West Virginia Wesleyan College and is currently enrolled at WVU-P under the Regents' Bachelor of Arts program.

The process of finding information from the Wood County Commission can be as simple as taking the time during normal business hours to come to the Wood County Courthouse and request documents. If you wish to make copies, the fee is one dollar per page.

If you wish to find information not easily accessible, you can file a Freedom of Information request – commonly called an FOIA request. The information will be compiled and sent to you for a fee of one dollar per page.

Why do people request this information? They might believe there is wasteful spending or wrongdoing by their elected officials, or they might wish to know what the Wood County Commission and its subdivisions are doing. The real issue is transparency. Not all those who question the workings of their local government can afford one dollar a page. Not all those who seek information can afford the time to sit in the Wood County Courthouse and search for the right page, the right document or the right order during business hours.

The questions I asked myself, "How do we present the most transparent form of government possible? How do we increase the average citizen's access to information?" With transparency comes trust from the public in their elected officials. Transparency is a requirement of good government.

Wood County has embraced the Internet age that surrounds us. At the county's website (www.woodcountywv.com/commission/index.html) you can research your tax tickets, as well as those of your neighbors. You can easily find mapping of the county to determine ownership of certain parcels and plats. You also can find the salaries of the county employees. The work done by Jamie Six, Wood County Clerk, and Steve Grimm, the assessor of Wood County, as well as the Wood

County commissioners that came before me, cannot be understated.

There are still miles to go in adding to the number of documents available online.

Technology is the answer. There are numerous parts of the puzzle that can be fit together to make government more transparent. A robust website that is easy for anyone to use and find the information they need or desire is the keystone. The equipment to store the mountains of documents and media to serve the website is necessary. There also must be the will to purchase such equipment and hire the necessary staff to make the systems simple enough to find the information desired.

With download speeds increasing, the cost of a personal computer at less than \$500 and the ability to go to any library in the state and access the Internet, the trust in local elected officials will only increase because of transparency. Those counties and municipalities that choose not to utilize these inexpensive measures will, at best, be behind the times and, at worst, present the appearance of hiding from public scrutiny.

The first hard drive to have a 1 Gigabyte (GB) capacity was the IBM 3380, built in 1980. It was the size of a refrigerator and weighed 550 pounds. The cost ranged from \$81,000 to \$142,400. Today, a 1 Terabyte (TB) hard drive – equal to 1,000 GB – can be purchased for under \$300 and fit in the palm of your hand! The cost for memory and the ability to store reams of data is minuscule. The repayment is the ability to quickly find relevant information. The Wood County Commission records many meetings, and within the next few weeks these recordings will be done digitally and posted on a media server. The cost of the server to host this media, the memory to store it (1 TB) and the equipment to record it, is less than \$4,000.



Parkersburg, West Virginia.

We have recognized that a governmental website must be maintained and designed to make information quickly searchable. Over the next few months, our website will go through a massive change. Gone are the days of nice pictures and a couple of links to the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention & Visitors Bureau. Now is the time for making the county website a tool of the public. New technology has made it possible to scan a document and have it searchable by text recognition software. A typical FOIA request may want to look into expenditures by an elected official. A well-designed website would allow anyone to click on Wood County Commission – Expenditures – Choose Date Range, and they would be directed to actual scanned receipts for those dates. Even without an FOIA request, anyone with a computer and an Internet connection can search the county's records 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

If anyone doubts the significance of these innovations and the direction of technology, just think: there was one website in 1990, and today there are 162 million registered sites. The scale of the Internet is overwhelming. The public will have access to information never thought possible. If they want to check a fact, verify a news story or debunk a rumor, they can

do it themselves. This is true transparency. The final issue is legislative. The state of West Virginia must embrace technology as well. The West Virginia legislature must enact rules and regulations to ensure the integrity of existing records, while allowing for electronic storage of historical records. Wood County could save tens of thousands of dollars in brick and mortar storage if the legislature would enact laws to allow electronic storage. The amount of paper documents that are housed in the county is immense. When these items are scanned, image searchable and posted online, the need for hard copies diminishes and the citizens are better served by their elected officials.

With transparency will come further scrutiny of the policies and procedures and inner workings of government. "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants..."
– Justice Louis Brandeis.

I would be bold to add, "and electricity lights the shadows." ♡

Photo courtesy of The State Journal.



Mid-Ohio Valley Still Home to Simonton After 60 Years

Mark Savan, President and COO
Simonton Windows

Mark Savan is President and COO of Simonton Windows, a Fortune Brands company. Savan joined Simonton Windows in 2006 after serving as vice president and general manager – accessories & commercial for Moen, Inc., a sister company within Fortune Brands.

Savan is a seven-year veteran of Fortune Brands Home & Hardware. Prior to his role at Moen, he served as vice president of strategic planning and new business development for Fortune Brands Home & Hardware.

Prior to joining Fortune Brands, Savan was with a management consultant for six years in the consumer and engineered products industry. He holds a B.S. and M.S. in optical engineering from the University of Rochester and an MBA from Case Western Reserve University.

During Savan's tenure, Simonton Windows has been honored to receive:

- The highest ranking in the J.D. Power and Associates McGraw-Hill Construction 2006 Residential Window and Patio Door Builder and Remodeler Satisfaction Study.
- The #1 Brand Leader in Quality ranking in the 2007 Brand Use Study for the category of vinyl windows.
- The second consecutive Best in Class Award for being ranked Overall Top Rated Vinyl Window Brand in an industry performance study.
- The Medal for Exceptional Public Service by the Office of the Secretary of Defense in recognition of the company's support of Homes for Our Troops (2007).

Savan serves as a member of the board of directors for the non-profit organization, Homes for Our Troops.

Simonton Windows has called the Mid-Ohio Valley home for more than 60 years. In 1946 our company was founded in Pennsboro, West Virginia, by Fred and Sybil Simonton. Originally called Pen Vent Awning, we've gone through many transformations in six decades. Yet still, our company calls Parkersburg and the Mid-Ohio Valley our home.

Our History

Several key milestones have made Simonton Windows into the industry-leading vinyl window and door manufacturer it is today. In 1989 a privately-owned company called SBR, Inc. acquired Simonton. Under the leadership of entrepreneur Sam Ross, Simonton introduced a seven-day delivery guarantee for custom-made windows that still sets us apart today from our competition.

From 1990 to 2006 Simonton spread its wings. Several manufacturing plants were established and running in Ritchie County, West Virginia. After



that, the company pushed westward by adding manufacturing facilities in Illinois, California and Oklahoma. In 2000 Simonton opened its own dedicated vinyl extrusion facility, SimEx™ which operates in St. Marys, West Virginia. The addition of SimEx helped Simonton grow into one of the largest and most respected vinyl window and door manufacturers in the country.

The successful growth of Simonton caught the attention of leading consumer brands company, Fortune Brands. As a result, in 2006 Simonton Windows was purchased by Fortune Brands and has become part of the company's impressive home and hardware category. With a foundation of powerful and trusted consumer brands like Moen and Therma-Tru, and a strategy focused on driving growth and enhancing returns, Fortune Brands aims for superior results in every aspect of our business.



Simonton casement windows in a Kosmer Solar House.

Our Products

From our early beginnings in the heart of West Virginia to our nationwide coverage today, our goal has remained the same – to always exceed the customers' expectations with the highest quality products available to the marketplace. Pair that with unbeatable service, and you have our recipe for success at Simonton.

We manufacture new construction and replacement windows and doors in a wide variety of styles, shapes and configurations. Our advanced, state-of-the-art manufacturing processes make it possible for us to maintain quality control and stay at the forefront of the industry.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our employees nationwide, we have excelled at product production and service. The results of their efforts have been rewarded over the years with multiple industry awards and recognition.

Our Future

Despite the current environment, the future for Simonton is bright. The sustained downturn in the housing market has impacted virtually every company connected with the industry. During this challenging time, we are using our experience, innovation and talents to fine-tune our operations and products.

The expertise we've developed over the years is evident in each window and door we produce. Our manufacturing and testing facilities – and our dedicated people – are committed to long-term product excellence and customer satisfaction. We believe that, with the proud history backing our company as a foundation, Simonton Windows will remain a strong leader in the vinyl window and door industry for the next sixty years. ♾

Photos courtesy of Simonton Windows.



Simonton's ProFinish Brickmold Awning Windows create a wall of light in this room.



Mark Savan (l), president of Simonton Windows, with John Gonsalves, president of Homes for Our Troops.



Connecting the Past to the Future

Cecil Childress, General Manager
Blennerhassett Hotel

Cecil Childress is the general manager of the Blennerhassett Hotel in downtown Parkersburg. Since 2004, he has overseen much of the restoration and renovation of the historic hotel, originally built in 1889.

Raised in far West Texas, he attended Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene and soon after began his 30-year hospitality career that has taken him to hotels in Houston, New Orleans and Atlanta, as well as state and national parks' resorts in Ohio and Nebraska.



The Blennerhassett Hotel, Parkersburg, West Virginia.

There is an old adage that owning a historic hotel is much like owning a minor league baseball team. A deep love for the game should strongly override the desire for financial return. Another saying is that the difference between old and historic is several million dollars. Somewhere beyond these proverbs lies a more factual axiom. When an integral piece of a community's past can be saved, its present and future opportunity may well be brought to focus.

Opened in 1889, the Blennerhassett Hotel has been involved in much of Parkersburg's history. The property was named after Harman Blennerhassett, friend (and possibly co-conspirator) to former Vice President Aaron Burr. The hotel was built by William Chancellor, a local oil and gas businessman. Parkersburg quickly

became the first oil "boom town" and greeted visitors from all over the country. The Hotel's lobby originally housed the First National Bank of Parkersburg (now known as United Bank).

While Parkersburg's history is well documented, the story of its declining downtown has largely been unwritten. Like thousands of U.S. cities, the community outgrew its need for a waterfront trade center. This created a disconnection in Parkersburg's cultural identity. Through a process of inner-city renovation, suburban mall flight and misguided "urban renewal," downtown Parkersburg further victimized itself by tearing down its landmark buildings. It soon became a sterile, homogenous central business district without a plan.



The Blennerhassett offers Executive Suites—one and two-story suites with spacious living room and separate bedroom areas.



Located on the second floor, the Alexander Parker Boardroom is equipped with state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment, unique push pin walls and comfortable ergonomically correct boardroom chairs

Now the Blennerhassett Hotel reenters the picture. With the help of a local bank and the vision of a local business family, the hotel has been transformed into a premier boutique facility. From the curious yet grateful traveler comes the obvious question, “Why is this here?” But from the clued-up local comes the knowledgeable response, “Why not?”

Since the cultural incubator has sprouted, downtown Parkersburg has grown in workplace population by an estimated 30 percent. The expansion of federal and county government buildings and personnel, the major growth of two hospitals, the groundbreaking of a major insurance company building, the beginning of a city/federal waterfront park construction and the completion of a historic public park are all new additions to a revitalized downtown. There is even an upscale downtown housing project underway.

Is all this growth simply because of the renovation of a small historic hotel? Even the local professional recruiters who utilize the hotel would not claim that. But they will tell you they love to put the community’s best foot forward by making sure their prospective recruits experience the difference between small town and picturesque community.



The Blennerhassett Hotel offers a diverse selection of dining options. Enjoy fine dining in Spats Restaurant, the casual atmosphere of Spats Lounge or the relaxed, outdoor setting of Spats Patio & Courtyard.

The Parkersburg natives also know the difference between a colorful past and a bright future. They are proud of their culture and proud of the past that still exists. They enjoy the changes in the Blennerhassett

Hotel and even joke about the difference they notice between old and historic. They say it’s about fifty bucks a night. ♡

Photos courtesy of the Blennerhassett Hotel.



Culinary Changes Lead to Sweet Success

Dominique Holl, President
Holl's Chocolates

Dominique Holl, a third-generation chocolatier, is the President of Holl's Chocolates, Inc., a small, family-owned producer of premium, handcrafted Swiss chocolates, founded in 1986 by his parents, Fritz and Elisabeth Holl. In addition to their main shop and production kitchen in Vienna, West Virginia, Holl's Chocolates has two shops in Charleston and a growing mail order and corporate gift business.

A West Virginia University Foundation Scholar, Mr. Holl graduated from West Virginia University in 1992 with a degree in international studies. Before taking over the management of the family business in 1994, he spent two years learning the art of chocolate making from his father, who had learned it from his uncle in the 1940s, in Switzerland.

Mr. Holl is a 1999 graduate of Leadership West Virginia.

Undoubtedly, the physical landscape of the Mid-Ohio Valley has changed greatly in the last 50 years. Being in the food business, we also have noticed great changes in the culinary landscape of the Valley. The advent of the Food Network, websites devoted to every type of cuisine imaginable and an increased willingness to pay for higher quality food experiences have all led to greater awareness and availability of gourmet and ethnic foods in the area. These changes are vividly illustrated by the experiences of my father, Fritz Holl, a Swiss-trained Master Chocolatier and pastry chef and the founder of Holl's Chocolates.

My father first came to the Mid-Ohio Valley 50 years ago at the behest of Carl Broughton of Broughton's Dairy, with the intention of making Swiss-style chocolates and pastries to be sold at the Broughton Ice Cream stores. Mr. Broughton wanted to introduce his customers to fine European chocolates and pastries, but in 1958 this endeavor proved unsuccessful. Perhaps peoples' tastes weren't accustomed to the more intense flavors of European chocolates, or perhaps people just didn't have the disposable income that would allow them to splurge on more expensive indulgences.

My father went on to work for Broughton's in several other capacities, first in its research kitchen

and later as the supervisor of a chain of ice cream stores. During all those years, he continued to practice his craft by making chocolates every Christmas and Easter for friends and neighbors.

Nearly 30 years later, in 1986, my father – then retired from Broughton's – decided to return to his original training and make and sell Swiss chocolates as a retirement "hobby." He started out cooking and dipping truffles in our home kitchen and after a few successful months, decided to take a chance and rent a small storefront in Parkersburg.

Positive word of mouth led to a steady increase in customers and within a couple of years his "hobby" had turned into a thriving small business. My mother, Elisabeth, joined him to run the store while my father made the chocolates. They soon outgrew the little storefront and moved to a larger space in Vienna. At the new store, fine coffee and wines – two other gourmet foods whose quality and importance to everyday life have grown considerably – were added to the offerings. Over the next 10 years, there occurred another expansion, a complete remodel of the shop and steady growth as my father trained me to take over the business and ultimately "retired" from his retirement hobby.





From top to bottom: Classic dark chocolate truffle, mocha truffle, milk chocolate cherry cordial.

Today, 50 years after my father first arrived in the Mid-Ohio Valley, Holl's Chocolates continues to thrive. Much like the increased awareness and education about coffee that has occurred in the last 10 years, there is now much greater interest in and appreciation of the intricacies and variations in fine chocolate.

Nowadays, our customers ask questions like "What is the cocoa percentage of your chocolate?" "What chocolate would pair well with this wine?" and "What are the countries of origin of your chocolate?"



These questions would have been surprising just 10 years ago, much less 50.

Much also has changed in the culinary landscape of the Mid-Ohio Valley. These changes mirror those in the country at large, as people are exposed to ever more diverse and exotic foods through the media and their personal travels. Now, without leaving the area, you can enjoy authentic Mexican, Lebanese and Chinese food, sample wines from all over the world, drink an expertly prepared espresso and of course,

indulge in some of the finest chocolates this side of the Swiss Alps. ♪

Photos courtesy of Charleston Magazine, Holl's Chocolates and the Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau.



The Fertile Environment of the Mid-Ohio Valley

Robert Kirkbride, President
Ohio Valley Land Company

Bob Kirkbride presently serves as president of Ohio Valley Land Company in Vienna, West Virginia and also is currently active in the Parkersburg-Marietta area with several companies which are engaged in business pursuits ranging from real estate development to construction contracting to oil and gas production. His other current business activities include service as a director of WesBanco, Inc., as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the WesMark Family of Mutual Funds and as one of nine commissioners on the State of Ohio's Third Frontier Commission.

Prior to entering the private business sector in 1981, Bob served as an officer in the United States Air Force, as cashier of the University of Houston and as vice president for administration and finance at Marietta College.

The accomplishments of which he is most proud are his participation in the nation's early space programs at the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas, and at the Air Force's Space and Missile Systems Organization in Los Angeles, California, and his 2004 selection as Small Business Champion for the State of Ohio, by the National Federation of Independent Business.

A native and current resident of Marietta, Ohio, Bob earned a bachelor's degree in economics from The College of Wooster and a master's degree in business administration from California State at Long Beach.



Marietta, Ohio.

During the years that I served as the financial officer at Marietta College, *Forbes* magazine published a list of the 200 most influential business leaders in the United States. Of the 200, three were natives of Marietta, Ohio. They were Ed Harness, Chairman of Proctor & Gamble; John G. McCoy, Chairman of Banc One; and Zane Barnes, Chairman of Southeastern Bell.

"Astonishing" may not be a sufficiently strong word to explain how a southeastern Ohio city of some 15,000 people could produce three of the nation's top business leaders, while the more than 200 million people (at that time) in the rest of the United States produced the other 197 business leaders on the *Forbes* list.

The explanation lies in the fertile environment of the Mid-Ohio Valley, particularly the educational environment. All three of these leaders were graduates of Marietta's public schools and graduates of Marietta College.

The fertile environment of the Mid-Ohio Valley has produced extraordinary results in the government sectors, as well as in business. Marietta counts among its native citizens Charles Gates Dawes, who became Vice President of the United States and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; Dewey Bartlett, another Marietta native, became

Governor of Oklahoma and later served as a U.S. Senator from that state.

And what about today? Is the environment of the Mid-Ohio Valley as fertile as ever? Sadly, in my opinion, it is not – at least not as fertile as environments that have developed in highly competitive states, such as Texas and Virginia. One measure of the impact of differing environments is demonstrated in the comparative populations of Ohio and Texas. When I moved from Houston to return to my boyhood home of Marietta in 1974, both states had fewer than 11 million citizens. By current estimates of the U.S. Census Bureau, Ohio's population recently rose above 11,500,000, while Texas's population now exceeds 23,500,000. One can only imagine the differences for the economies of the states of Ohio and West Virginia if there were twice as many people in Ohio today.

The changes that are necessary to improve the environments of Ohio and West Virginia are neither simple nor can they occur instantly. West Virginia has a current advantage because of the recent publication of Dr. Russell S. Sobel's *Unleashing Capitalism*, which provides an excellent blueprint for changes in government policy that would produce improved economic conditions in the state.



Clockwise from upper left: American Flag at Ohio River, tourists in downtown Marietta and a sternwheeler at Marietta's Ohio River levee.

With the combined burdens of federal, state and local taxes at the highest levels since World War II, what is clear is that governments' usual practice of solving budget shortfalls by increasing taxes is approaching the brick wall of taxpayer resistance. In my working lifetime, the improvements in efficiency and productivity in the private sector of our economy have been significant. Similar improvements in governmental activities have been less obvious. Because of the leadership of states like Texas and Virginia, I have a vision that the governing class at all levels of government will be more open to change and will rediscover the political courage that led to events like the American Revolution and the formation of West Virginia.

Change in the private sector is often driven by pressure from a company's shareholders. The system for the owners of government (the citizen shareholders that I prefer to call voteholders) is presently not nearly so responsive nor as timely in its responses.

My vision is that the tension between the needs of government for more revenue and the resistance of voteholders to increased tax burdens will result in steadily increasing activism among voteholders. One can observe these trends as thousands of employees lose or leave their jobs with large corporations and become entrepreneurs with employees of their own. Once they face the myriad laws and regulations, ranging from safety to handicapped accessibility to unemployment compensation to withholding taxes to health insurance, with the related costs thereof, these once-pampered corporate employees will view governments in a different perspective.

Both sides of the Ohio River in the Mid-Ohio Valley are lined with smokestacks that provide testimony to the industrial might that still resides here. And yet, some voteholders in the Mid-Ohio Valley are very much aware that tens of thousands of young Chinese continue to leave their farms to work in their nation's factories for 25 cents

per hour. Closer to home, Texas has no state income tax and is a right-to-work state that has been handily adding tens of thousands of jobs.

Can the politicians at all levels of government that affect the fertile environment of the Mid-Ohio Valley find the political courage to improve the policies, efficiency and productivity of government? I hope so. My vision indicates that they can and will. Otherwise, in the next generation, Marietta, Ohio, won't produce the successors to Ed Harness, John G. McCoy, Zane Barnes, Charles Gates Dawes or Dewey Bartlett. They could instead be produced in Victoria, Texas, or even in Yangzhong, China. ♡

Photos courtesy of Marietta/Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Southeastern Ohio Port Authority.



Pursuing Happiness in the Workplace

Michael A. King, President and CEO
Camden-Clark Memorial Hospital

Mike King is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Camden Clark Memorial Hospital in Parkersburg. He is a native West Virginian from Clarksburg, a West Virginia University graduate and received his Master's in Health Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University/Medical College of Virginia in 1978.

He has 28 years of experience at a senior executive level of management, ranging from the CEO at a 30 bed rural community hospital to Senior Vice President for Operations at the Charleston Area Medical Center to his current position today. He is also currently a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives. He's been married 32 years and has three children.

Recently a study was released on a topic important to all of us: happiness. Scientists from the United States and the United Kingdom conducted research in more than 80 countries in an effort to gain an understanding of what makes people happy. For many of us, particularly in the U.S., happiness is linked to our jobs, and studies conducted on job happiness and well-being usually reveal some surprising results.

While money and security are major factors for employee satisfaction, most people would be surprised to learn that it takes more than that for most of us to feel happy at our jobs. One such business study indicates that more than 60 percent cite "recognition" as a major factor in their job happiness. In another study, employees were asked to list the things needed most to be happy at work...number one on the list was appreciation.

Now, I firmly believe that we as individuals are responsible for our own happiness. We are



all adults and make life choices every day that contribute or tear down our happiness. However, I know that we all like to be appreciated, no matter what level in the business world we obtain. It gives us a sense that we're not just doing our job, but doing it well. Moreover, it's important for a business to formally celebrate and recognize the efforts of its employees. Job appreciation contributes to a positive work environment and, thus, to an individual's own happiness.

Not long ago, Camden-Clark Memorial Hospital showed its appreciation to employees during an annual employee recognition dinner. It was a very nice evening, full of recognition and pride. It reminded me that one of the proudest moments of my life was the day I received my Eagle Scout award. To this day, I maintain that



Mike King recognizes two Camden-Clark volunteers for their service.



Mike King discusses patient satisfaction goals to members of his nursing staff.

reference on my resume and have placed the award in a wooden frame under glass, along with my other scouting merit badges. I told the group gathered at the recognition dinner about the sense of pride that I held for a low cost piece of ribbon with a metal eagle hanging from it. Why? Because I knew the hard work, commitment and sense of pride to accomplish something that seemed almost impossible to me. It was the same for the young Cub Scouts that were in my son's Cub Scout Pack...they relished in the recognition of obtaining badges and pins. Those simple recognitions drove them to accomplish more, to re-dedicate themselves to the principles of the Scouting organization and to form a greater sense of self-esteem.

Every employee performs a vital role in the health and well-being of an organization. Each has a unique contribution to make. We know that there will always be factors in the business environment that try to undermine our mission or tear down the principles and beliefs that we hold central to what we do. Taking the time to recognize each other and celebrate the good things takes time and is often glossed over for lack of time. Formal recognition is important and the "small stuff" – the time we take to recognize individuals in the day-to-day business operations – is essential, both to our employees' satisfaction and to our own, as leaders.

Recognizing our peers, then, is really a cause for all of us to share in the sense of appreciation. It is also tremendously important in improving the work environment. If we improve the work environment, we will make gains on our business indicators. Bottom line, it is always best to worry less and "be happy." ▾

Photos courtesy of Camden-Clark Memorial Hospital.



The River, The Law and Your Lawyer: The Value of Being Licensed in Both West Virginia and Ohio

Robert L. Bays

Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love LLP

Robert L. Bays is a partner in the Parkersburg office of Bowles Rice and concentrates his practice in civil trial litigation and commercial work. His trial work and general commercial practice in both Ohio and West Virginia has included an array of different experiences from commercial litigation, personal injury litigation, construction litigation, products liability, legal and medical malpractice, employment issues, partnership litigation, estate and trust litigation and oil and gas litigation. Bob most often appears in defense of insurance carriers and employers, but has also frequently prosecuted injunctions, business disputes and insurance coverage disputes.

Bob is a charter member of the West Virginia Defense Trial Counsel, a member of the Ohio Association of Civil Trial Attorneys and the Defense Research Institute. From 1983 to 1986, he served as Parkersburg Municipal Judge and from 1986 to 1989 he served as a member of the West Virginia State Bar Board of Governors. Bob is former chairman of the West Virginia Continuing Legal Education Committee.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Miami University, Bob received his undergraduate degree in 1973, cum laude. He earned his law degree, cum laude, from The Ohio State University College of Law.

In 2005, Bob received the McDonough Award for Outstanding Community Service in Parkersburg. He has been a member of the board of directors of the Parkersburg YMCA for over 20 years. Bob serves as counsel for the Parkersburg-Wood County Area Development Corporation and Wood County Development Authority.

Every day residents of the Mid-Ohio Valley cross the Ohio River and likely give no thought whatsoever to the effect the laws of the different states can have on their lives or businesses. The Parkersburg office of Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love has a number of lawyers licensed in both states and is committed to dual licensure to better serve our clients.

Knowing the law in both states is helpful in a number of situations. For example, oftentimes in employment contracts for key personnel, restrictive covenants are used to protect the employer from future competition by a key employee. These provisions are commonly called non-compete covenants. The law of both states is remarkably similar with respect to non-compete contracts. In West Virginia, the law, with respect to such covenants, is as follows:

“a covenant not to compete is reasonable only if it (1) is no greater than is required for the protection of the employer, (2) does not impose an undue hardship upon the employer, and (3) is not injurious to the public.”

See *Weaver v. Ritchie*, 197 W. Va. 690, and *Reddy v. Community Health*, 171 W. Va. 368 (1982).

Ohio law provides that a non-competition agreement is reasonable and enforceable where the agreement:

“(1) is no greater than is required for the employer’s protection; (2) does not impose hardship on the employee; and (3) Is not harmful to the public.”

See *Rogers v. Runfola & Associates, Inc.*, 57 OH St. 3d 5.

It is readily apparent that there is no significant difference in the law of either Ohio or West Virginia when it comes to determining the validity of a non-compete clause. However, the difference between the two states is significant when you look at how non-compete covenants are dealt with by the courts of each state. Traditionally, the West Virginia courts have reviewed a non-compete covenant based on the entirety of the covenant. That is to say, if any portion of the covenant is deemed to be unreasonable, then West Virginia courts will generally strike the entire non-compete covenant as unenforceable.






However, Ohio courts have taken just the opposite approach. Under Ohio law, where a non-compete covenant is deemed unreasonable, the trial court has the authority to modify it to achieve a reasonable result. See *Rogers v. Runfola*, *supra*. Ohio courts will most likely “blue line” the covenant and interpret it to be enforceable by revising any portions of the non-compete covenant that it finds to be unreasonable.

For example, a standard non-compete covenant for an employee oftentimes contains a provision that limits non-competition for a period of years. Generally, a non-compete covenant for a period of one year or two years has a good likelihood of being determined to be reasonable in

either Ohio or West Virginia. On the other hand, a provision that limits an employee for competing for five or more years is likely to be determined unreasonable. A West Virginia court, when confronted with a five-year ban on competition by an employee, would likely determine that the entire non-compete covenant is unreasonable and unenforceable. An Ohio court, faced with a similar covenant, would likely determine that the five-year ban on competition is unreasonable but would then proceed to modify the covenant to a reasonable term of one or two years.

These differences in how the courts of Ohio and West Virginia would deal with a non-compete provision in a business

setting are of extreme importance when drafting agreements for the employment of key personnel. Along the Ohio River, the party seeking to enforce a non-compete covenant or to defeat such a covenant often has options as to where to file suit. The right decision on choice of the forum state can make all the difference for the client. Having a lawyer who practices law in both Ohio and West Virginia can help you get the best result. 

Parkersburg, West Virginia photo courtesy of Stephen Shaluta, Jr., West Virginia Department of Commerce Communications.



Parkersburg, Doorway to the Past

Dr. Robert W. Stephens, Jr., President
Bernard McDonough Foundation, Inc.

In 2006 Dr. Robert W. Stephens, Jr. was elected president of the Bernard McDonough Foundation, Inc., one of West Virginia's largest independent foundations. Prior to coming to the Foundation he served for 29 years in various administrative positions at Ohio Valley University, culminating in the presidency in 1998.

Dr. Stephens is a native of Parkersburg, West Virginia, and an alumnus of Ohio Valley University. He earned a bachelor's degree from Morehead State University, a master of arts degree from Harding University Graduate School, a doctorate from West Virginia University and holds an honorary doctorate from Alderson Broaddus College.

He has served as chair of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce of the Mid-Ohio Valley; two terms as president of the Community Service Council of Greater Parkersburg; two terms on the executive board of the Mid-Ohio Valley Red Cross; treasurer of the West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; academic vice-chair for the executive committee of the West Virginia Independent Colleges and Universities; and on many other boards and associations.

He currently serves on the Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Airport Authority; the Economic Round Table of the Mid-Ohio Valley; the Downtown Task Force for the City of Parkersburg; the board of directors of the regional Economic Round Table; the Downtown Rotary Club of Parkersburg; the McDonough Center at Marietta College; and numerous other boards.

A compelling reason for living in the Greater Parkersburg area is the wonderful quality of life that so many of us who are lifelong residents may take for granted. Among the highly prized attributes that contribute to our quality of life is the rich historical significance of this area. Let me share with you just a few of our "claims to fame" in the annals of American history.

The Burr Conspiracy and Blennerhassett Island

Aaron Burr, who served as Vice President of the United States from 1801 to 1805, ended his promising political career in 1804 by killing Alexander Hamilton in a duel. Traveling westward, Burr encountered Harman Blennerhassett and his charming wife, Margaret, who lived on an Ohio River island just south of Parkersburg. He persuaded Blennerhassett to assist with the financing of a military expedition to the Southwest Territory.

Blennerhassett's estate, located on his expansive and somewhat secluded island, became their operational base. This suspicious undertaking was halted with the arrest of Burr and Blennerhassett in 1806 on the grounds of treason against the United States.

The Blennerhassetts were ruined by the events surrounding the arrest, and their palatial home was burned to the ground. Fortunately, a replica of their mansion has been reconstructed on Blennerhassett Island and is operated as a state park.

Blennerhassett Island has become home to the Putnam-Houser house, constructed in 1802 by Aaron Putnam, son of famous Revolutionary War hero, Israel Putnam. This home has been meticulously restored and is an excellent example of construction in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Visitors are transported to and from the island by a majestic sternwheeler reminiscent of a bygone era of river transportation.

The Blennerhassett Museum of Regional History, located on Second Street, is a wonderful source of regional history with exhibits dating from early prehistoric Indians. Many of the Blennerhassetts' relics are included in the displays.

Henderson Hall

One of the most historic sites of the area is Henderson Hall, located north of Parkersburg on Route 14. This 17-room, Victorian-styled home has remained nearly unchanged since its completion



Although the original Blennerhassett mansion burned to the ground in an accidental 1811 fire, it has been recreated on the home's original footers and is a popular site for visitors to Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park.



Henderson Hall, in a photo taken in the 1880s.



The meticulously restored Putnam-Houser house, originally constructed in 1802.

in 1859. Fortunately, the Hendersons saved not only furnishings acquired through the years, but letters, legal documents and diaries dating back to the 1700s. The Hendersons' slave plantation consisted of 2,600 acres. The Oil and Gas Museum in Parkersburg now operates this wonderful and unique heritage asset.

Included in the artifacts are an original land grant signed by Patrick Henry, ballots for the 1860 Lincoln vs. Douglas presidential election, a letter written by Robert E. Lee and family diaries describing in detail life in the 1800s. The overland journal kept by John G. Henderson in 1798 on his journey from Virginia, down the Ohio River and up the Little Kanawha River, is of special historic significance.

Recent findings indicate that Alexander Henderson, John's brother, was the person responsible for informing President Thomas Jefferson of the military expedition, with treasonous intentions, planned by Aaron Burr and Harman Blennerhassett. It was this warning that brought the plot to light and led to Burr's and Blennerhassett's arrest. Alexander's original notes for these events are stored at Henderson Hall.

Alexander also was a combatant in the only recorded duel to have taken place in this area, which was conducted on a bluff overlooking Belpre, Ohio. Henderson was seriously wounded in the duel and was lame for the remainder of his life.

The Birth of the Oil and Gas Industry

Parkersburg and the surrounding area played a significant role in the earliest commercial development of the oil and gas industry, dating back to the late 1700s and early 1800s. Most notable was Burning Spring Run, a boiling spring that would ignite when fire was applied. One of the most famous of the early oil barons was J. C. Rathbone, who drilled a 140-foot deep well at Burning Springs in 1860 that produced 100 barrels a day. Within a year there also was a pumping station linking 14 wells east of Parkersburg, at Petroleum.

"Oil fever" hit soon after, and boom days arrived that drew national attention to Parkersburg and the surrounding area. Parkersburg became a major oil refining and distribution center that brought commerce, wealth and growth to the entire area. However, the Civil War interrupted this exciting boom.

During the war, the first oil field targeted for destruction was located at Burning Springs. In May 1863, Confederate General William E. "Grumble" Jones initiated a raid that destroyed the oilfield in an attempt to disrupt the Union Army's use of this valuable resource. Also of significance are the key roles played by oil people from Parkersburg in building Standard Oil with J. D. Rockefeller, from 1875 to the 1960s, when Jack Rathbone, descendant of J. C., became president and chairman of the board of Exxon.

The Oil and Gas Museum, located on Third Street in Parkersburg, brings these early oil boom days to life through fascinating exhibits, videos and historical documents. The museum has built parks at two of these early oil fields, Burning Springs and California. The museum's Civil War collection is one of the finest in the area.

The preceding is just a sampling of significant historical events that took place in this area. There are numerous Civil War sites, including the recently completed Fort Boreman Park, overlooking downtown Parkersburg. Parkersburg played a key role in West Virginia statehood, producing the state's first governor, senator and congressman. The beautifully restored Julia-Ann Square Historic District, with its stately Victorian homes, many built by the early oil barons and politicians, is a must-see. And the list goes on.

Once you have exhausted the historical sites in the Parkersburg area, you have yet to discover the historic jewels of Belpre and Marietta, Ohio, with their numerous museums, old cemeteries and countless stories surrounding the settling and shaping of the Northwest Territory.

So get off the couch and travel back to a time when life may not have been as simple as we might have thought. ▽

Photos courtesy of the Bernard McDonough Foundation, Inc. and the Greater Parkersburg Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Local Media Face Challenges and Opportunities

Roger Sheppard, Vice President and General Manager
WTAP-TV

Roger Sheppard is the vice president and general manager of WTAP-TV in Parkersburg. In addition to its NBC affiliate, which has been in operation since 1953, the station also operates two other stations, FOX Parkersburg and My5, an affiliate of MyNetwork.

Mr. Sheppard has worked in print, cable and broadcast media for more than 30 years, in positions as diverse as reporter, anchor, political cartoonist, news director and local sales manager. Among his former places of employment are The Charleston Daily Mail, The Parkersburg News, KDKA-TV (Pittsburgh) and WOWK-TV (Huntington).

He is currently the chairman of the board of the Chamber of Commerce of the Mid-Ohio Valley and is on the WVU-Parkersburg Foundation board of trustees.

A graduate of West Virginia University, he has done work on his master's degree in political science at the University of Pittsburgh.



How can a mass communicator receive, process and share two-way communication and become a community conduit for all sorts of information in a way that is meaningful?

That is the challenge facing West Virginia television stations and other media in an age where immediate access, instant gratification and validation are as important as the who, what, when, where and why.

Mass media – which, by their very definition, have been involved in collecting, packaging and disseminating news for the past few hundred years – have always offered readers, viewers and listeners a way of giving them feedback. The most powerful is when folks “vote with their feet” and choose not to subscribe or watch or listen to various media. Yes, there are letters to the editor and call-in shows and polls, but today that is not enough.

People are looking for ways to connect. Some might say they're looking for vicarious ways to connect – creating personae for social websites that allow them to filter what they share and who they are – with other similarly guarded persons on-line. What this prevents (and perhaps this is its allure) is people having to deal with other people in an instantaneous, human way – reading body language, making incorrect judgments based on appearance, perhaps even sorting out the subliminals of scent!

Where does this leave today's media? Scrambling for ways to maintain relevance, that's where.

It's not enough to be a newspaper with thousands of inches of information each week. It's not enough to be a radio station that carries local sporting events and local news. It's also not enough to be a television station that offers local news.

WTAP is one of the smallest TV stations in America. It operates in one of the smallest cities to be the home of an NBC affiliate. Nonetheless, we still do nearly 24 hours of newscasting each week – the equivalent of one non-stop day out of every seven. We also operate a FOX affiliate with its own local newscasts each weeknight, and a MyNetwork station that is also a Mountaineer Sports Network station. We operate a website – or “webchannel,” as we call it – that attracts more than 120,000 unique visitors, viewing more than 1.2 million page views, each month.

But even this is not enough.

The media must find more and better ways to bring people together. This was the vision of folks like Marshall McLuhan when he spoke of the “global village.” When one watches TV or the Internet these days, one gets the sinking feeling that he was right, and that all the world wants to talk about is the trials and tribulations of Hollywood starlets.

While the lives of the rich and famous will always hold an allure for many people, the Internet is changing people's lives in very fundamental ways – for good and for bad. Our children may be learning how to be good keyboard operators and computer programmers, but they may be losing the human ability to interact with one another face-to-face. They may be getting more information at their fingertips in one hour than their predecessors could have gotten in a month of visits to their local library. But they are also being bombarded with information many parents would prefer they not see until they are older and can put it into better context.



WTAP's master control room, where the station operates its NBC, FOX and MyNetwork stations in High Definition and Standard Definition. Master Control Operators Tom Boggs (left) and supervisor Bill McClure (right) are shown on the job.

It also is forcing the media to change. What is a “fact” in the age of Wikipedia? Too often, a fact is whatever gets repeated enough on the Internet, whether it’s an “accurate fact” (what other kind is there?) or not.

Local media are facing challenging times, but there are tons of opportunities remaining, and they all have to do with one key word: local. Local media have the resources to give people what no other media can give them, IF they seize the opportunity. But merely being local will not be enough. Local media must engage their readers and viewers in ways they have never imagined. Instead of crossword puzzles and funny pages, on-line gaming and humorous local video may be the answer. Instead of letters to the editor, a more vital and real-time interaction between reporters and consumers is required. Rather than merely reporting the news, helping to put it into clearer focus and more context are what is key. And the media have to give their consumers a way to feel they are a part of and a contributor to what is going on.

It’s a great time to be in the information business. Things are changing fast and consumers are wanting more every day. The successful communicators will be the ones who are able to find the parade... and lead it! ♪

Photos by Dean Hart, courtesy of WTAP-TV.



WTAP Broadcast Engineer Kevin Buskirk (left) and Production/Informational Technologies coordinator Larry White (right) work in the central equipment room where most of the equipment to operate the three television stations, is located. They are wearing jackets because the room is kept at cool temperatures so the equipment will operate more efficiently.



Like Kind Exchanges: If You Can't Beat 'em, Defer 'em!

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Richard A. Hudson is a partner in the Parkersburg office of Bowles Rice and a member of the firm's tax group. He concentrates his practice in corporate, health care and estate planning law. Rick, also a Certified Public Accountant, has a multifaceted practice, which allows him to serve a variety of clients, from physicians and hospitals to individuals and corporations.

Rick specializes in the negotiation of purchase and sale transactions involving hospitals and hospital-related entities and the representation of physician groups and management services organizations. He is also skilled to assist with mergers and acquisitions, compliance plans, HIPAA, physician contracts, stark and anti-kickback analysis and certificate of need and licensing issues.

Rick's estate planning practice includes the preparation of tax sensitive wills, revocable living trusts, irrevocable family trusts and charitable trusts. He handles complex corporate transactions, as well as the general representation of business entities. Rick represents businesses before the Internal Revenue Service, the West Virginia Department of Tax and Revenue, the West Virginia Office of Tax Appeals and the United States Tax Court.

Rick received his bachelor of arts degree, *summa cum laude*, from Bethany College and earned his law degree from Georgetown University. He is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, the U.S. Tax Court and the U.S. District Courts for the Northern and Southern Districts of West Virginia. He is active in many professional organizations.

J. Breckenridge Martin is a partner in the Parkersburg office of Bowles Rice and concentrates his law practice in the areas of business and tax planning, commercial transactions, health care and real estate.

Breck assists clients with creation, operation and dissolution of corporations, partnerships and limited liability companies. He represents buyers and sellers in the transfer of business interests, and he assists physicians and health care providers with respect to Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse, self-referral limitations and other health care issues. He represents clients in the acquisition, sale and development of commercial real estate and construction projects and also assists banks and borrowers with commercial loan structuring, documentation and collateral issues.

A native of Wood County, Breck received his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Georgia and earned his law degree from the West Virginia University College of Law. He is admitted to practice in West Virginia, the United States District Courts for the Southern and Northern Districts of West Virginia, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and the United States Tax Court. He is a member of the board of directors of the Blennerhassett Historical Foundation and the West Virginia Land Trust, and he is the current vice-president of the Mid-Ohio Valley Estate Planning Council.

Businesses and individuals selling assets for a profit certainly face income tax consequences. However, while they may not be able to escape paying the tax, it may be possible to defer it. One way to accomplish this is through a Like Kind Exchange under § 1031 of the Internal Revenue Code.

In a simple Like Kind Exchange, a taxpayer exchanges one piece of business or investment property for another. Seldom does such a straightforward opportunity present itself. Much more commonly, the taxpayer sells the property and uses the proceeds to buy another similar piece of business or investment property, postponing the recognition of any gain from the first sale until the sale of the second, which may be years or even decades later. Of course, such favorable tax treatment does not come without responsibilities. § 1031 and the supporting regulations have a variety of requirements and hoops to jump through to ensure that a taxpayer adheres to two overriding rules: (1) the taxpayer must exchange property of "like kind," and (2) the taxpayer must not receive cash or other benefits from the sale of the first property.





Exchange Of Like Kind Property.

In a Like Kind Exchange, both the property sold and the property purchased must be held for productive use in a trade or business or for investment. Good examples are office buildings, apartment complexes, warehouses and business equipment or machinery. Both properties must be of a like kind. They do not have to be identical, as long as they are similar in nature or character. For example, a taxpayer can exchange real estate for other real estate, or machinery for other similar machinery, but real estate cannot be exchanged for machinery. Moreover, certain types of property cannot be used in a Like Kind Exchange at all. For instance, § 1031 does not apply to exchanges of stocks, bonds or partnership interests, even if they are used in a trade or business or held for investment.

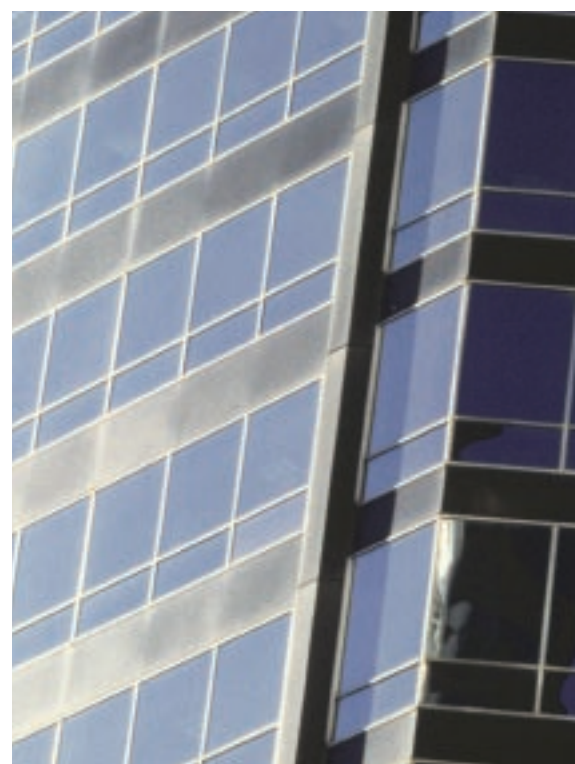
Receipt of Cash or Benefits.

Generally, if the taxpayer receives cash or other non-qualified property from the sale of the first property, gain will be recognized gain for the amount of cash or non-qualified property received. To avoid “receipt” of the cash in a forward Like Kind Exchange, the taxpayer enters into a Qualified Intermediary Agreement with a qualified third party, who receives and

holds the proceeds from the first sale in an account under the Qualified Intermediary Agreement until the funds are used to purchase the second property. Additionally, the taxpayer’s contracts for the sale and subsequent purchase must be assigned to the Qualified Intermediary to ensure the money is not deemed to have been actually or constructively received by the taxpayer.

Once the transaction is properly structured and documented, the taxpayer can sell the first property and wait up to six months to purchase the second property, as long as two requirements are met: (1) the second property (or several likely prospects) must be chosen and identified to the Qualified Intermediary no later than 45 days after the sale of the first property, and (2) the second property must be purchased no later than the earlier of (i) 180 days after the sale of the first property or (ii) the due date of the taxpayer’s return for the year of the first sale. If either of these conditions is not satisfied, the Like Kind Exchange will fail and the taxpayer will likely have immediate income tax consequences.

As with most transactions involving income tax consequences, it is important to follow



the rules to ensure that you get the full benefit of the tax laws. You may not be able to avoid your or your business’s income taxes, but with careful planning, good tax advice and cautious documentation, a Like Kind Exchange may help you defer those taxes for many years to come. ▾

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