



# Hello, Hamilton County

E-News for Hamilton County Residents and Staff

September 10, 2004

“We will serve the residents of Hamilton County by providing the best and most responsive county government in America.”  
 — Hamilton County Vision

## Inside this issue:

<b>Award Winning Organization</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Two Offices Relocate</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>OPERS Potential Changes</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Save The Date!</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Thursday's Child</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Anti-Idling Campaign</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Recovery Month</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Homeland Security Efforts</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Citizen Corps Volunteers</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Children's Support Group</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Walker Elected</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>County PBS Suite Drawing</b>	<b>4</b>

## An Award Winning Organization Regional Planning Commission

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and its alliance of local planning commissions, known as the Planning Partnership, is one of the most recognized community planning organizations in the nation. Their recognitions include an international award, 11 national awards, and two state awards this year. The bevy of awards come from the International City/County Management Association, National Association of Counties, National Association of County Information Officers, Ohio City/County Management Association, and the General Assembly of the State of Ohio.



Commissioner John Dowlin presented RPC Executive Director Ron Miller and staff 11 NACO and NACIO awards at the commissioners' September 1 meeting.

“The remarkable number and scope of RPC awards in 2004 are the result of the incredible teamwork and dedication present in our staff, and the creativity and professionalism that they continuously deliver,” commented Ron Miller, Executive Director of RPC.

RPC's awards recognize their high standards of service, outstanding achievements and innovative programs. Many of the awards are a result of RPC's alliance of public, private and civic sector planning organizations (the Planning Partnership), and the Partnership's groundbreaking comprehensive planning process known as Community COMPASS. Commissioner John Dowlin presented eleven of the awards to the RPC staff at the commissioners' September 1 meeting.

### Correction

Two of the mixed paper recycling drop-off sites listed in last month's issue are now closed — Western Hills Plaza and College Hill.

The other two sites — Norwood and Sharonville are still up and running. If you have mixed paper for recycling, please visit one of these sites.

## Two County Offices Relocate

The Community Development Department recently relocated to 630 Main Street.

Along with the CD staff, the Section 8 Program, Housing Specialists, and Housing Inspectors are also located at the 630 Main Street office.

To contact either of these programs, call their general information line, 946.8240.

The county's Purchasing Department has moved to the 5th floor of the County Administration Building, Room 507.

The Grants Coordinator and the Surplus Assets Program are also located in Room 507.

If you would like to contact the Purchasing Department, call 946.4335.

## OPERS Potential Changes

The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) recently announced its proposed Health Care Preservation Plan (HCPP) that, if implemented, will affect many future retirees.

The goal of the HCPP is to allow OPERS to continue to provide access to meaningful health care benefits for future eligible retirees and dependents. To do that they are proposing:

- ◆ A phased-in increase in employer and employee contribution rates;
- ◆ Implementing phased-in health care benefit and eligibility changes that will lengthen the solvency period for the OPERS' health care fund.

OPERS mailed newsletters to members and held local member meetings in July.

Hamilton County encourages you to become familiar with the proposed changes and how they will affect you.

You can get more information from:

- ◆ A detailed presentation on the OPERS web site home page, [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org)

which also provides members with an opportunity to complete a questionnaire giving OPERS feedback on the proposed HCPP;

- ◆ Contacting the Employee Call Center at 800.222.7377 with specific questions or requests for information.

At this time OPERS is asking for feedback about the proposed changes. Please visit the OPERS website or call to share your opinions.

# 9-11-01

*A moment of silence*

## Save the Date! Community COMPASS Commencement

The culmination of the planning phase for Community COMPASS — the county's master plan and strategies — will be held on Saturday morning, November 20. Location and time to be announced soon.

This public meeting launches the implementation phase of COMPASS. At the meeting, you will learn about the outstanding progress that has been accomplished as evidenced by more than 50 projects, programs and partnerships already initiated by the Regional Planning Commission/Planning Partnership to achieve the vision for the county's future.

The meeting will focus on implementation recommendations and priorities, as well as key findings in 12 state of the county reports.



## Thursday's Child For Information Call 513.632.6366

Katrina and Kimberly ~ birthdate: April 1991

Katrina (pictured left) and Kimberly are energetic, eager and a sweet set of twins. This duo enjoys being together and they share a lot of the same interests.

On rainy days, Katrina and Kimberly enjoy reading a good adventure book or drawing, painting and coloring. They enjoy playing card, board or video games too. Usually you can find these two girls outside swimming, swinging on the swing set or riding their bikes. They also like to climb trees and go camping.

When it comes to their favorite foods they will agree it has to be pizza and hot fries for them. They like to watch various Disney movies and videos. Their favorite music is Christian or gospel songs.

Both girls are developmentally no target, but will require ongoing therapy and medications.

These charming twins are looking for a loving and supportive family to call their own.

## Anti-Idling Campaign To Begin

The Department of Environmental Services, Air Quality Management Division (AQMD) announced the launch of its new anti-idling campaign.

In conjunction with a recently awarded grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency to retrofit school buses with particulate trapping oxidation catalysts, the AQMD will be encouraging bus drivers and parents to reduce their idling time in order to lessen schoolchildren's exposure to harmful diesel exhaust emissions.

Grant money has allowed the AQMD to equip 34 Riggs Company school buses in the Cincinnati Public School District with clean exhaust technology, as well as to fuel the entire 74 bus fleet with biodiesel. Biodiesel is a domestically produced cleaner burning renewable fuel that can be manufactured from new and used vegetable oils and animal fats. It is biodegradable and reduces many toxic air pollutants. This 20% biodiesel blend reduces emissions of particulate matter by about 10 percent. Buses equipped with this clean air technology can reduce other emissions by up to 40 percent.

These technologies, combined with a reduction in idling time, will greatly reduce the amount of exposure those in and around schools will have to harmful exhaust fumes.



Over the school year, AQMD will be expanding the anti-idling campaign

beyond the schools serviced by Rigg, offering programs and incentives to bus drivers who make conscious efforts to reduce idling time. Until then, everyone can be active in the campaign by remembering to "Turn The Key. Be Idle Free."

For more information about the campaign, visit [www.hcdoes.org](http://www.hcdoes.org).

## National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

The National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month celebration rally will be held Tuesday, October 5, 11:40 a.m. until 1:15 p.m., on Fountain Square. (The rain location is the ADAS Center Gym, 3009 Burnet Avenue.)

The Recovery Month observance highlights the societal benefits of substance abuse treatment, lauds the contributions of treatment providers and promotes the message that recovery from substance abuse in all its forms is possible. The observance also encourages citizens to take action to help expand and improve the availability of effective substance abuse treatment for those in need.

Bring your lunch and enjoy the rally on Fountain Square in celebration of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month!

For more information about this event, contact Tony Martinez, 621.7202, or email [tony.martinez@hamilton-co.org](mailto:tony.martinez@hamilton-co.org).

## Homeland Security Efforts Bring 49 Jurisdictions Together

Since 2003, the city and county have been participants in the federal Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant program. UASI



has successfully brought the city and county together to work on homeland security. The joint city-county efforts include the Terrorism Preparedness

Advisory Team (TPAT), a joint Regional Operations Center (ROC), and a Terrorist Early Warning Group (TEWG).

TPAT members include the ten critical disciplines made up of first responders (e.g., law enforcement, fire, EMS, emergency management, communications, etc.) TPAT also has representatives from other key groups (e.g., Red Cross, County Coroner,

and County Municipal League). The team oversaw the first UASI-required threat and vulnerability assessment of the 49 jurisdictions within the county.

The TPAT team has also approved two year's of UASI spending plans. The top priority went to purchasing personal protective equipment for first responders. Mobile decontamination stations are being purchased, the region's hospitals are being outfitted with response equipment, and other equipment purchases have gone for HazMat and increased law enforcement surveillance capabilities.

The city and county committed to the establishment of ROC. At the city's invitation, county emergency management functions will relocate to the newly refurbished building and join the city in creating a state of the art emergency operations center. Other local, regional, state and federal agencies have been invited to reserve space in the new center, which is also the new home to the city's fire and policy dispatch center.

TEWG is a multidisciplinary, intelligence gathering unit that will identify links in information to find the early warning signs of terrorist activity in the area. TEWG will also develop risk and vulnerability assessments of facilities and events, and develop plans to respond to incidents at those facilities and events. TEWG is also located at the new ROC. Based upon the Los Angeles County Sheriff's model, the county's version expects to establish new linkages with federal agencies and strengthen existing ties with local ones.

TPAT will meet with its counterparts from Clermont County in September. That will be followed by an eight-county regional conference scheduled for mid-October.

For more information about these homeland security efforts, contact Peter Hames at 946.4432, or send an email to [peter.hames@hamilton-co.org](mailto:peter.hames@hamilton-co.org).

### Citizen Corps Volunteer Sign-Up Day

Citizen Corps, coordinated by the Department of Homeland Security, is a growing legion of citizens that are taking personal responsibility to make their families, their homes, and their communities safer from the threats of crime, terrorism, and disasters of all kinds. September 11 is Citizen Corps Sign-Up Day. You can visit participating Fire Departments and McDonald's restaurants to sign up.

In the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack, Citizen Corps volunteers can play an important support role for first responders by providing staffing at shelters, delivering food and water to victims and helping with search and rescue. Citizen Corps is enlisting volunteers, training them and organizing them so that they can be quickly and efficiently mobilized for disaster response. You can get involved by calling 1.800.VOLUNTEER or visiting [www.serveohio.org](http://www.serveohio.org).

In Hamilton County, volunteers are needed to distribute Citizen Corps information at the polls in November. If you would like to volunteer for this effort, contact Mary Spatt, 851.7080.

### Walker Elected Chairperson

Bernice Walker, Director, Small Business Development, was elected Chairperson of the National Bar Association's (NBA) Government Lawyers Division, during their 79th Convention recently held in Charlotte, North Carolina. She was also recognized as the board member recruiting the most members.



In addition to serving as chairperson, Bernice also serves on the NBA Board of Governors.

### Children's Support Group

Children in the public child protection system can get support while their parents obtain help for their drug and alcohol problems.

The 10-week Family Drug Court Children's Support Group program began this year at the Alcoholism Council of the Cincinnati Area in Mt. Auburn. Separate groups of eight children, ages 6-10 and 11-15, meet with a social worker for an hour each week. Their parents have active Children's Services case aides transport the children. "These kids just seem to slip through the cracks," says Judy Stadler of Children's Services. "We want to make sure that somebody is there for them."

Stadler served on a committee convened by Family Drug Court that secured a grant for the program. The committee includes representatives from Job and Family Services, the Prosecutor's Office, Juvenile Court, defense attorneys, local substance abuse treatment providers, Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime, and the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board.

In the program, children learn about their parent's disease and its impact on the family. They are encouraged to identify and express their feelings and concerns – and to appreciate their individuality and uniqueness. They are shown how their personal actions and behaviors, particularly use of alcohol and drugs, are their own responsibility. They learn they are not alone and that others share their problems, hopes and concerns. The program is voluntary.

"We know that children in families with a history of substance abuse are more likely to become abusers, too," Stadler says. "We're trying to stop that from happening."

### County's PBS Suite Drawing

County residents can register to watch a Bengals' game from the county's Paul Brown Stadium suite.

The drawing for the October 25 game will be held on October 6, following the County Commissioners' meeting. The November 28 game drawing will be held November 10.

Winners must respond within 48 hours of the drawing.

The deadline for entries is November 8, 2004.

Only one entry per person permitted.



### "Got News?"

Send an email to [sharon.booker@hamilton-co.org](mailto:sharon.booker@hamilton-co.org).

Deadline for next issue: September 22.



Please remember to print and post *Hello, Hamilton County* in your areas so that everyone can see what's going on!

**Thank you** to everyone who contributed to this issue.

*Hello, Hamilton County* is published twice monthly on the County's web page. It is intended to inform both Hamilton County residents and staff. If you have questions or suggestions for future editions, please contact Sharon Booker (946.4428), Peter Hames (946.4432), or Cheryl Willis (946.4324). To subscribe or unsubscribe visit [www.hamilton-co.org](http://www.hamilton-co.org) and click on the green "Newsletter" button.