

2022



# *Report to the Community*

[nicholasville.org](http://nicholasville.org)

# Letter from the Mayor

Dear Friends,

Vibrant, growing, and caring are the words that come to mind as I think about Nicholasville in 2021.

The creative ideas put forward by elected officials, employees and other leaders are what make our community vibrant. A few years ago, we built new playgrounds. Now, we are planning to build a community center to offer recreational opportunities on a whole new level. Like many of you, I've seen how sports and recreation can contribute to local economies as I travel from place to place to watch family members' games. This center will add to our quality of life directly through recreation opportunities, and indirectly through increased tourism.

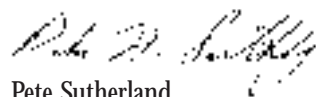
You'll read in the following pages how our facilities and programs are growing to meet the needs of expanding personnel and services within public safety. The new police station is nearly complete after years of planning and anticipation. Our fire training capabilities are improving with better facilities. All of our public safety personnel are top notch. As a result, many of them have recently advanced in their careers to fill openings created through retirements. These are big shoes to fill, but they are fully capable.

As our population grows, our infrastructure must as well. Most people don't want to talk about utilities unless they are not working well, which is exactly why they are so important. Following extensive planning over many years, we kicked off the expansion of our wastewater treatment facility with a groundbreaking ceremony in December. I'm pleased to say this \$20 million project is fully financed.

Finally, there are no more caring people than the employees of our city. Come to City Hall any day and you will be met by people who are doing their best to make Nicholasville safe, comfortable, and prosperous. Each year we share information about a few of them and their special projects in this report. The heartwarming story about Copsicles is a great example.

Thank you for choosing Nicholasville as your home and being a part of the fabric of this society. We are grateful for you and for this vibrant, growing, and caring community.

Sincerely,



Pete Sutherland  
Mayor



## INSIDE

Department Briefs	3
New City Logo	3
Welcome Back!	4
Operation Copsicle	5
New Community Center	5
New Police Station	6
Career Police Promotion	7
Fire Dept. Training Center	8
New Fire Dept. Leadership	9
Treatment Plant Expansion	10
Paperless Utility Billing	11
New City Planning Director	12
Grant Opportunities Administrator	12
Van Bugg Retires	13
Tourism Is Back	14
City Directory	15
Award of Excellence	16

# Your City Commission and Departments



Pete Sutherland  
Mayor  
Administration & Finance



Patty Teater  
Mayor Pro Tempore  
Meter Department



Betty Black  
Streets and Cemetery



Alex Carter  
Water Departments  
(Treatment, Distribution and  
Collection)



Bethany Davis Brown  
Public Safety  
(Police & Fire Departments)

## City of Nicholasville Gets a New Look

This year, thanks to the creativity and collaboration of the people of our community, the City of Nicholasville developed a new logo. The months-long process started with a request to the community for submissions, and people responded by sending their ideas for consideration. Ultimately, a winner was chosen, and a graphic designer worked with the City to hone the design as a visual representation of the city.



The new logo features a nod to our historic downtown area, along with a street-sign inspired rendering of the city's name. Keep your eyes peeled for this logo in action as it replaces the previous logo on city vehicles and building signage.



Submission by Raven Warren Trainor, 2nd place, Employee pick, and Citizens pick in the 19 and Older/Open Category.



Submission by Gwen Henson, 1st place in the 19 and Older/Open Category of the competition.



Submission by Ryleigh Fleming, 1st place in the age 13-18 Category.



Submission by Caleb Cadle, 2nd place, Employee pick, and Citizens pick in the age 13-18 Category.



Submission by Kaitlyn Cadle, 1st place and Employee Pick in the 12 and Under Category.

# Welcome (Back), Doug Blackford!



“This position wasn’t on my radar at all, but I love this city, and I was more than willing to find a way to remain in service.”

In January of 2021, City Hall welcomed a familiar face, Doug Blackford. Blackford served for 12 years on the Nicholasville City Commission—6 of which as Vice Mayor. Now, Blackford serves as the Director of General Government, a position that had been vacant for many years.

In this role, Director Blackford’s responsibilities include the day-to-day management for four City departments: Police, Fire, Streets & Stormwater, and Cemetery.

“The last person that filled this position retired. Then there was a change in administration, and then the recession hit,” said Blackford. “While I was on the Commission, we collectively decided we had other priorities for our limited resources during those years when the budget was really tight, so we held off on filling this position.”

The Commission had identified a list of priorities they wanted to focus on funding, like a new fire

station and the new police station. Once those things were completed or underway, the Commission revisited the idea of a Director of General Government.

At that time, Blackford had made the decision to leave the table. He was pursuing a new opportunity at his job in the private sector. However, with over 25 years of management experience in manufacturing, and 12 years of direct city government experience for the City of Nicholasville, Blackford had the perfect credentials for the role.

Other City employees were thrilled to see the position filled. As Director of General Government, Blackford takes a lead role with each department to create yearly budgets and forecast needs and benchmarks for the next 4-5 years. He also helps establish objectives for each department and helps find ways to meet those goals on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis.

Additionally, Blackford assists with the daily operations of researching and reporting to ensure that the elected officials have the information they need to make informed, efficient decisions on behalf of the City.

“There’s a misconception that some of our city officials are full-time employees, when in fact all of our commissioners and our mayor serve on a part-time basis,” said Blackford. “They put a great deal of time and effort into our community, and they have huge commitments outside of their City responsibilities. I am glad to be able to take some of the pressure off them.”

# NPD Launches Operation Copsicle

Is there anything more iconic than the sound of the ice cream truck coming down the street? Now, the Nicholasville Police Department has its own version of this classic: the Copsicle Truck!

“We had this military surplus truck sitting outside that the department had gotten for free, but we hadn’t put it use,” said Police Chief Todd Justice. “I saw a police department in a different state that had started a program in their community to hand out popsicles. I thought, we’ve got this vehicle. I want our agency out in the community getting to know the public—during the good times as well as the bad. What better way than with an ice cream truck?”

That was when Chief Justice went to the community services team and told them about his crazy idea. “At first, they were laughing about it and making jokes,” said Chief Justice. “And then, they did the legwork, and they took off with it.”

Recent high school graduate Ty Hutchens designed the outside of the truck, while new recruits to the police department helped decorate the inside. Flavor Ice donated the first 1000 popsicles, while others

have been donated by members of the community.

The truck allows the police



department the opportunity to have positive interactions with members of the community, attending daycares and nursing homes, neighborhood events and more. In winter months, the department can stock the truck with hot cocoa and coffee and continue attending events. In addition, the truck serves as a drop-off location for community drives for items like school supplies and winter coats.

This department has long sought ways to get into the community and build trust between the community

The Copsicle started patrolling the City in 2021 to the delight of many youngsters.

and the officers, including initiatives like Coffee with a Cop and others. When COVID began, it forced Chief Justice to rethink how to have safe interactions with the community. “I’ve worked 23 years as an officer, and I started day one here in Nicholasville,” said Chief Justice. “I love this community and I want to make a difference in it.”

## A New Place to Compete, Meet and Celebrate

The City of Nicholasville is thriving. The population is rising, and businesses are booming. Even so, something has been missing: a place for the community to gather for events of all types.

That’s why plans for a new community center are in the works and City officials, are hoping to bring them to life in the spring of 2022.

“We have heard a lot throughout the community for the last couple of years about a need for this in our city and county,” said Alex Carter, Nicholasville City

Commissioner. “We have made a lot of progress and we are excited to keep moving forward.”

Plans call for the center to be a joint venture between Jessamine County and the City of Nicholasville through the Parks and Recreation Board. City Commissioners and planners are now looking for grants and available funding as well as the perfect lot to build the center on.

It is proposed that the multi-purpose facility will include four indoor basketball courts that can also be

used for volleyball, archery and more. Other courts are also being included for racquet ball, squash, and even pickle ball.

Along with these areas for sports and physical activities and tournaments, there will also be rooms for community gatherings such as city meetings, birthday parties, graduation parties, and other events.

Watch for more details as plans are refined and more information about funding is available.

# New Police Station to Open Its Doors in 2022

The long-awaited move to the new Nicholasville Police Department (NPD) headquarters at 717 North Main Street is nearly here, which means leaving behind the small and outdated building that has been their home since 1983.

At 25,000 square feet, the new building is ten times the size of NPD's previous home and boasts major upgrades to both the security of the building and its features. The move will bring not only improvements for the employees of the police department, but for the community as well.

"I never thought in my career I'd see it," said Police Chief Todd Justice. "I've been here 23 years and thought I'd retire out of this building." But after nearly 40 years in the retrofitted gas-station-turned-police-station, the upgrade is long overdue.



The new station was built on property already owned by the City.



With larger rooms, large windows, and rooms for training, the new NPD headquarters was designed to provide a better work environment.

The new building will house an enhanced space for training and meetings, an in-house workout facility and a new-and-improved evidence storage location. The additional space also means that, for the first time in decades, the entire department will be able to work under one roof.

The community will also benefit from the new space. The city commission, which has been meeting in tight quarters at city hall until now, will begin using the new community room on the main floor for its meetings. The larger space ensures capacity for not only city officials in attendance, but also members of the public who want to attend.

The community room is also large enough to host trainings and meetings for the entire police force at

once. "I'm excited to be able to bring events here that we wouldn't normally be able to," said Chief Justice. "We spend a lot of money to send our folks away for training; we'd love to have the ability and space so that we don't have to worry about that anymore."

Furthermore, the city will now be able to host trainings itself and open them up to members of other police departments. By bringing in outside departments for trainings, the community benefits from the money they spend on lodging, dining and so on.

Interested in seeing the building for yourself? Nicholasville residents will be able to tour the new space during the open house to be held soon after completion.

# Career Cop Advances to Second in Command



Major Fleming, recently promoted to Assistant Chief after 20 years on the job in Nicholasville. Fleming never wanted to be anything other than a police officer.

In May 2021, the Nicholasville Police Department promoted a new Assistant Chief of Police. Major Michael Fleming, a 20-year veteran of the department, succeeded Major Chris Cain in a planned succession. He worked side-by-side with Major Cain for two months to make the transition seamless.

That's important, because the duties of the Assistant Chief are involved and have a major impact on the safety of the community. As Assistant Chief, Major Fleming is the go-to manager for day-to-day operations, with each division director reporting to him. He also serves as a stand-in whenever Chief Todd Justice is unavailable, meets with the community and the school board, and helps with budget management.

For Major Fleming, the job is a dream come true.

"I've wanted to be a police officer since I was three years old," Fleming said. "My parents told me it was all I talked about."

It was no surprise, then, when Fleming chose to study Criminal Justice at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. When the Kentucky Police Corps came to Marshall to recruit, Fleming saw his opportunity.

"I started looking around at places in Kentucky where I might want to work and have a career," he said. "I met with Chief Waldrop and we really hit it off. He said, 'Bring back this application and tell me you want to work with me. I don't want to hear that you went anywhere else.' So I did, and that was that."

"I've wanted to be a police officer since I was three years old... My parents told me it was all I talked about."

During his time at the NPD, Fleming has filled many roles, being promoted through the ranks in the Patrol Division for most of his career until he was transferred to the Administrative Captain position. He also served on Bike Patrol, the Collision Reconstruction Team, and as a Field Training Officer.

All that experience has prepared him for his current position, and he is optimistic about the future of the Police Department. "I see a great future for the group we have today. I see great leadership potential and people who truly care for this community," Fleming remarked. "A lot of them grew up here and are devoting their careers to protecting their home."

As for the future for Major Fleming? Right now, he's focused on learning as much as he can from Chief Justice. "We're very open about our plans around here. We think it's best to plan ahead, and Chief Justice plans to retire in summer of 2023. At that point, I want to be ready to take on the role of Chief."

It will be like a wish granted for a man whose entire life has been dedicated to being the best police officer.

# Practice, and Lots of Training, Makes Perfect



The new equipment and learning spaces on the property provide for better training opportunities. (Right) John Schaefer, Deputy Chief of Training and Safety, began his career as a volunteer.

When your job includes running into burning buildings, it is mandatory that you be meticulously trained and at the ready. With that in mind, the Nicholasville Fire Department (NFD) recently added a brand-new training facility.

While the training center is new, it's not unfamiliar. The land where the training facility is now located was always used by the department, and now they officially own it. The NFD received a grant last year for the facility.

The property hosts classrooms and training units. The training area comprises a 40-foot-long by 8-foot-wide shipping container and a fire training course. The Department hopes to install a burn unit within the coming years, which would be a building they could actively set on fire to train and practice their life saving work.

This facility has also made the NFD a training resource for surrounding communities, as they are planning on having other departments travel here to utilize the equipment.

The department appointed John Schaefer, former Shift Commander at the station, Deputy Chief of Training and Safety last May. He started working with NFD as a volunteer in 1999 and has enjoyed every moment since.

“With a department this size, we have a lot of support in the community for these firefighters,” said Schaefer, “We’re a family.”

Schaefer has an impressive certification list of his own. He is the President of the Kentucky International Association of Arson Investigators, is a certified EMS (Emergency Medical Service), and is currently training to become EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) Instructor certified.

Becoming an EMT instructor will allow Schaefer to train firefighters for EMT certifications right here in Nicholasville, rather than sending them elsewhere to do so, as they have had to do up until now.

Along with all of the physical training products they have added to the property, there are larger and more-equipped classrooms to aid in obtaining certifications

and skills necessary for the job. Everyone in the fire department must be certified in certain lifesaving medical techniques which may include EMS, EMT and CPR.

“My job is not only to train the new recruits, but to be sure everyone maintains certifications in different areas,” said Schaefer.

Another safety feature that is coming within the year is a Fire Safety House, which is a great tool for fire awareness and prevention. The house is a hands-on tool that will be taken to local schools to help people in the community learn how to escape a fire and be prepared, should they ever be in that situation.

“The fire house is nothing short of spectacular,” said Schaefer. “It’s going to train generations of people.”

Recent expansions allowed the Department to hire four new trainees, which puts them at full staff, 24/7.

The Nicholasville Fire Department is dedicated to educating and protecting the people in this community, making the necessary improvements to ensure that happens, and they will not stop any time soon.

# New Leadership Heads Fire Department



Chief Craig Cox (left) and Assistant Fire Chief Marty Kazsuk were promoted from within after the retirement of former Chief Mark Case early in 2021.

This year was a year of many changes for the Fire Department, including seeing two new faces in the Department's highest offices.

## Fire Chief Craig Cox

Craig Cox was promoted to the Chief position of the Fire Department in February 2021. Cox has been with the Nicholasville Fire Department since he started as a volunteer in November of 1998. After 19 years as a firefighter, also working as a shift commander, Cox was appointed to Assistant Chief, where he worked for 3 years before becoming Chief.

"We have a great staff here, and they carry a great load," said Cox, "I continue to learn from them on a daily basis."

Cox has been a driving force in the department ever since he started, and he understands the importance of working as a team, especially in a work environment that can be physically and emotionally challenging. He receives high

praise from his team and colleagues on his work as Chief so far.

## Assistant Fire Chief Marty Kazsuk

In March of last year, Marty Kazsuk was promoted to Assistant Fire Chief. He previously was Deputy Chief of Training position and a shift commander before that.

Kzsuk has been with the Nicholasville Fire Department since 2002, when he began as a volunteer. Since then, he has held multiple roles within the department and excelled in each.

"No matter what your skills or knowledge are when you move into a new position, building levels of trust with personnel and building their confidence is important," said Kazsuk, "We lean heavily on our line personnel."

## A Vision for the Future

One thing that both Chief Cox and Assistant Chief Kazsuk would like to work on together is employee retention. This means not only finding great recruits, but also ensuring an environment that makes them want to stay.

"I want Nicholasville Fire to be a place that a young person wants to get hired and then retire at. I want them to see their career being here," said Cox, "And if they don't already live here, I want them to look at potentially moving here and starting a family in this community. I think that is really important."

Are you interested in becoming a Nicholasville Firefighter? Visit [Nicholasville.org](http://Nicholasville.org) to find out more and to download an application.

# Groundbreaking News in Nicholasville



This expansion has been in the works since the existing treatment plant was built. Many of those who had a hand in the plans, financing, operation, and expansion of the facility gathered during the groundbreaking event.

Most people have never been to visit the City's wastewater treatment plant, tucked away in the Eastern part of Jessamine County. However, in December of 2021, a large group of people gathered to break ground for the expansion of the Jessamine Creek Environmental Control Facility. This expansion will double the size of the plant by mirroring the original facility on Shun Pike. The Environmental Control Facility is a wastewater treatment plant, which is vital to the life and health of the community.

Capacity for the current plant was reached in 2019, but that has not hindered the success of the facility and the teams who work there. The plant is currently able to treat the 4.1 million gallons of wastewater it receives daily and return it safely to the environment. This expansion will increase the average daily output permitted to 7.1 million gallons of water per day, an increase of 73 percent. This helps the city comply with the Clean Water Act by treating more wastewater during periods of heavy rainfall, improving the environment in and around Nicholasville.

The treatment system at the plant is also being updated to provide a cleaner discharge based on an added Chemical Feed System and New Oxidation Ditch Treatment System to improve the quality of the water returned to the environment. Overall, the system will go through technological updates to bring it up to today's standards and improve efficiency.

"This infrastructure project is going to allow Nicholasville to grow and to thrive, while also protecting the environment," said Bob Amato, Public Utilities Director for the city. "It is critical to our community."

During the groundbreaking program in December, Mayor Pete Sutherland recognized the countless elected officials, contractors, and employees who have worked tirelessly, allowing these plans to come to life. All parties involved recognized the improvements this expansion will make on the environment in the area, in turn improving the lives of the citizens of the City.

"This wastewater system expansion will allow our economy to prosper for many years to come, serving

our citizens and businesses with the needed utility capacity to meet the demand of our great city," said Alex Carter, Nicholasville City Commissioner.

This expansion was driven by the population increase in the city. When the current facility was built in 1996, original employees knew that they would need to grow with the population of the city and had these expansion plans in mind. Since its resurrection, the wastewater department has won many awards for Operational Excellence, including the past five years in a row.

Dave Short, the Wastewater Superintendent, has also been working on this expansion for most of his term in his current role. He follows in the footsteps of many great predecessors, one of them being his father, Don Short. Don was the Wastewater Superintendent when the original facility was built.

"This plant has carried the City well for the past 25 years, and the expansion will carry us well into the future," said Dave Short.

Plans for this \$20 million expansion began three years ago and will take about 24 months to complete. The expansion was designed by HMB Professional Engineers Inc. and will be constructed by Dugan & Meyers.

Expanding the facility is not the only change that has been made this year. Some of the pipes flowing under the city are up to 60 years old. The utility began an ongoing program of replacing and repairing those older pipes.

"Some of the things we have worked on this year are not noticeable to folks right away," said Amato, "But all of the work makes sure everything keeps working and really improves the lives of those in the community."

# Utility Billing Goes Paperless

The City of Nicholasville Public Utilities is proud to announce the new paperless billing and payment system. The online utilities portal is a convenient and beneficial way for customers and city residents to access all utility account and billing information online.

The Utility Portal was introduced to the community in February of 2021 and allows customers access to monthly usage history, manage multiple accounts, and access other account information all in the same place.

This portal also introduced online billing and payments for Nicholasville Utilities. On this portal you can find the option to opt out of paper billing or to view and pay your bills directly online. When this option is chosen, no paper is sent out for the monthly utility bill, and it is instead emailed directly to the account holder to pay, completely online.

When you sign up for paperless billing, you save money and help to save the environment, one bill and piece of paper at a time. Only 10-15% of customers are currently utilizing the online payment option and online portal, and Nicholasville Utilities serves approximately 16,500 customers through the city transmission and distribution systems.

Minimize clutter by going paperless. Start today by signing up for the Nicholasville Utilities online portal and billing.

Interested in going paperless? Learn more and sign up for the online portal today at [www.nicholasville.org/utilities/](http://www.nicholasville.org/utilities/).

## Did you know...

The Utilities Online Portal allows you to:

- view and pay your current bill
- view billing and payment history
- access monthly usage history
- manage multiple accounts from one place
- access all other account information



Along with all of these amazing features, you can opt in to our eBilling option after signing up for the online portal. eBilling allows you to receive and pay all bills directly online. It is easier than tossing the

monthly utility bill you have been receiving into your kitchen drawer, and it helps to save the trees.

Take advantage of these great features and sign up for the Utilities Online Customer Portal today!

## How Prepared are You?

Unpredictable events like tornadoes in December that rip across the state, flooding, automobile accidents, and more are hard to prepare for and can be very scary. However, there are many steps you can take to be ready for one of these situations.

1. Keep a blanket and extra warm clothes in your car in the event of a stranding.
2. Do not leave pets or family members unattended in the car at any time.
3. Keep water bottles and non-perishable foods stored in your car and house in case of a lockdown emergency.
4. Be sure to have a communication plan in place

with your family and loved ones in the event of a weather emergency such as a tornado or hailstorm.

5. Sign up for Jessamine County's Code Red Weather Warning online to be notified when severe weather alerts come from the National weather service. You can sign up here: <https://jessamineco.com/departments/emergency-management-2/>.

While emergencies cannot always be predicted, we can prepare for them.

Stay safe this year and take the steps above to make sure you are prepared in case of an emergency.

# Nicholasville Native Tim Cross Steps Into City Planning Director Position

After eight years of working with the City of Nicholasville as the City Engineer, Tim Cross stepped into a new role in October of 2021 as the City Planning Director.

This new role includes overseeing the department, which works closely with property owners and developers as the community continues to grow in an intentional way. Responsibilities of the Planning Commission include enforcing zoning and building codes, oversight of new subdivisions and infrastructure development, flood plain enforcement, community rating systems, and other related areas.

Tim's background as the City Engineer helped prepare him to seamlessly step into the City Planning role. As the Engineer, he helped with utility management and infrastructure planning, which are also big parts of his current role. The City Engineer position is now occupied by Brian Clarr, who began his work in late December of 2021.

City Planning requires a lot of communication with different people in the government and in the community to get plans approved and out into the world.



Tim Cross, PE was named City Planning Director.

"It all comes back to relationships and relationship building," said Tim. "I really enjoy it."

Now that he is in the Planning Director position, he is very hands on with bringing new opportunities to the City and seeing them through. He is heavily involved with guiding and directing other teams to review, submit, and initiate new projects in and around Nicholasville.

A big part of Tim's new role is engaging with members in the community and figuring out what they want to see in their City. Because the population in Nicholasville is increasing and more people are moving into the community, certain amenities are now in higher demand than ever before.

"We are looking into getting more neighborhood parks, adding bike lanes, adding more shopping and dining options in the area, and other things that we feel like the community wants to see," said Tim. "We want to add things to make our city more progressive and keep it a very nice place to live."



Stephen Pracht assumed the newly created position of Grants Administrator.

## Administrator Helps Grant Opportunities

When Stephen Pracht joined the Nicholasville Police Department as a bookkeeper, he did not know that soon he'd be scooped up to be part of General Government. But when he quickly turned around a major grant application, he showed a skillset that City leaders realized they could use in a different way.

In the midst of the coronavirus outbreak, the city was facing a lot of unexpected overtime for first responders. While some employees were out due to quarantines or other pandemic-related absences,

other employees were stepping up to cover all the bases and racking up hours. Some first responders also saw their workload increase as the pandemic created medical emergencies and so on.

Steve found himself working hard to be part of the solution. A coronavirus grant offered by the State would, if awarded, provide reimbursement for the overtime of first responders, greatly reducing the financial burden on the City. "I had some experience in a previous position with grant-writing, but this was my first time writing an entire grant by myself," said Steve.

Still, in just two days, he had the application complete, and shortly thereafter he learned he'd been successful.

"We saw that Steve could be a major asset to the City," said Kathy Walker, City Clerk. "It didn't take us long to see that he could pay for his own position several times over just by seeking out and applying for these and other types of grant opportunities."

So, they hired him, and in early 2021, Steve became the Grants Administrator for the City of Nicholasville.

These days, Steve always has several plates spinning. He's currently working on some grants for funding for the fire department and has submitted but not received word back on grants for improved equipment for the police department.

"I also recently partnered with the Technology Librarian, Mr. David Powell, at the library to apply for a grant that would supply hot spots for students in the Jessamine County school system who did not have reliable access to the internet. We got that grant, which was worth \$650,000."

If you see Steve around City Hall, be sure to say hello—and thank him for helping our community find resources to thrive.

## Bugg Retires After 20 Years of Service

Long-time City of Nicholasville employee Van Bugg retired last July after 20+ years as the city's Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent.

"Van Bugg was as good as any Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent in the state," said Bob Amato, Director of the City of Nicholasville, and Bugg's Supervisor. "Under his direction, the City has won 13 awards for excellence for the Plant. To illustrate what an accomplishment that is, annually, the state recognizes less than 10% of all treatment plants across the state."

Bugg was a biology major at Morehead State University and was hired straight out of college. He arrived at the Nicholasville Wastewater Plant when the plant was first being built. Then, he oversaw the expansion of that same plant in 2008.

Bugg made strides for the city of Nicholasville throughout his entire career, and even postponed his retirement to continue helping the city. He stayed for



Van Bugg (left) joined in the groundbreaking ceremony for the wastewater treatment facility expansion.

an extra 10 months to help oversee day-to-day operations and keep the plant operating up to state standards when no one else could.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant is known for being neat, clean, and orderly, and this is in large part thanks to Bugg. He was big on scheduled maintenance to prevent problems and was a huge part of keeping this city going.

"Van was an outstanding employee and superintendent, and his successor has some big shoes to fill," said Amato.

This position is now occupied by Dave Short, and he is certainly filling those shoes and doing an amazing job, leading the current wastewater expansion project and other important wastewater maintenance programs.

# Tourism is Back in the Bluegrass



The City of Nicholasville has so much to offer for fun experiences, and a lot more is coming.

In 2020, travel was made almost impossible at times. Despite the abrupt pause in tourism, 2021 has been one of the best years yet for travel to Nicholasville and Jessamine County.

“Even though the COVID-19 Pandemic was still there this year, we have noticed that we’ve had a spike in travel,” said Mitchell Pearson, the former Executive Director of the Nicholasville, Wilmore – Jessamine County Tourism Commission. “We tried to make sure any events had opportunities for people to enjoy in a safe way.”

Travel began to pick up again in March of 2021 and continued to boom throughout the year. Lodging facilities in Nicholasville saw the highest numbers on record that the city has seen to date

in the months of July and August 2021. “The area is growing, and the numbers help to show that,” said Pearson.

A huge part of these large lodging numbers could be some local favorite events returning to the area after one year of being cancelled due to the pandemic. These events include the Barbasol Championship, Wine and Vine, Jessamine Fall Festival, and more!

## The Barbasol Championship

The biggest event held in 2021 was the Barbasol PGA Golf Championship at Keene Trace Golf Course. This event drew lively crowds but was set at a limited capacity for safety reasons.

The Championship will take place in Nicholasville until 2023 and has been moved up one-week next year to not coincide with the



Mr. Steve Buttleman, the Official bugle player for Churchill Downs and Keeneland, kicks off the Barbasol Championship weekend.

British Open. With intentions to attract even bigger names in golf and larger crowds moving forward, you’ll want to be sure to mark your calendars for July 7-10, 2022.



(left) Groups of people came out to taste the delicious wines. The Kentucky Wine and Vine Fest is known for. Downtown was full of families and people of all ages taking in all of the beauty and treats of fall in Nicholasville.

## Wine and Vine Festival

After one year of being cancelled, the Wine and Vine event was back at Servant Heart Farm in Wilmore last August. This event had around 2,500 guests, so it was very well attended and a great time for all who showed out.

“After a dark year, the light is now shining!” said Pearson.

A few more community favorite events that occurred last year were the Jessamine Fall Festival in downtown Nicholasville, as well as Spooky Time. These events serve as yearly reminders of what a great community Nicholasville is for tourists and locals alike.

## New Attractions Pull in More Out of Town Visitors

In 2018, Camp Nelson was recognized as a National Monument by the National Parks Services. This allowed for renovations, new flows within the exhibits and new tours. “It will be very exciting to see future endeavors at the new National Monument!” said Pearson.

Although Nicholasville is most known for their superb wineries, an old bourbon distillery will be making its way home later this year. The EJ Curley Bourbon Distillery is planning to renovate and move back to its original location in Nicholasville in May of 2022. This distillery will be a huge attraction, with the potential

to pull in 100,000 plus visitors per year.

Nicholasville is also expecting a new community center in the coming year that will make a great place for youth and adult sports leagues to practice, hold tournaments, and more.

Unfortunately, Live N The Ville had to be cancelled last year due to safety concerns but is planned to return to the heart of downtown Nicholasville in the upcoming years.

COVID-19 took a toll on the tourism industry, but rural areas such as Nicholasville seem to be bouncing back faster than other, more populated areas.

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# Excellent in Every Aspect

The Jessamine Creek Environmental Control Facility, the City of Nicholasville's wastewater treatment plant, broke ground on their facility expansion in December. However, that is not the only exciting news coming from the wastewater treatment team.

While the past two years have been anything but ordinary, the team of people at the plant continue to be extraordinary in the work that they do.

Last year, the team was honored with the Operational Excellence Award for the fifth consecutive year.

This team of hardworking employees also received the Award of Excellence for Sewer Plants in 2021. This award comes from the Kentucky-Tennessee section of the Water and Environment Federation and is a proud moment for all who have worked at the wastewater treatment plant, all who currently do, and all who will in the future.

"They have put in countless hours, and it has taken a lot of helpers and work, but we are very proud of where this team is today and all they have accomplished," said Bob Amato, Public Utilities Director.

Providing a clean wastewater treatment system for residents and businesses is essential for health and prosperity in Nicholasville, and they make it all possible.

Congratulations to the entire team for another year full of successes.