

LOUISVILLE METRO COUNCIL
Wednesday, November 9, 2005 • 10:30 a.m.

The new Metro Government in Louisville brought not only a new Mayor and executive team, but 26 members of a new Metro Council, representing 26 new districts across the community, with about 26,000 residents per district. The new Council districts responded to a major issue in the unity campaign, which was that the three Commissioners on Jefferson County's legislative body – called Fiscal Court – each represented some 224,000 citizens each – more than those represented by members of the Kentucky legislature. In contrast, the City of Louisville's 12-member Board of Aldermen represented about 22,000 citizens each. The new districts were drawn by Dr. Bill Dakan, an urban geographer at the University of Louisville who was contracted in 1998 by local government leaders to prepare a district plan for adoption by a merger task force of local elected officials.

The creation of a single legislative body spanning the former City of Louisville, 83 incorporated suburban cities, and the unincorporated portions of Jefferson County – each holding about one-third of the community's population – unleashed a flood of new applicants for Council seats. More than 200 citizens filed for primary elections in May of 2002, and more than half of the 26 members elected in November of that year had never before held elective office. Metro Council members run in partisan elections by district. Council terms are four years, with no term limits. The Council is composed of 14 Democrat and 11 Republican members; six members are African-Americans. Council members each have one staff member, and a Democratic and Republican caucus also have assigned staff. The Metro Council meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month.

In this panel, four members will discuss the challenges, opportunities, joys and frustrations of serving on the first legislative council for Louisville-Jefferson County Metro government, and will describe the working relationship between the Council and the Executive Branch of Metro government.

PANELISTS

Tom Owen was elected to the Metro Council in November, 2002, representing District Eight. Previously, Tom served on the Louisville Board of Aldermen from 1990-1998. He currently represents the neighborhoods of Irish Hill, Phoenix Hill, Cherokee Triangle, Original Highlands, Tyler Park, Germantown, Poplar Level, Deer Park, Bonnycastle, Highlands-Douglass, Belknap, Hayfield-Dundee, Bashford Manor, Upper Highlands, and Gardiner Lane.

Owen is a full professor at the University of Louisville, holding a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Kentucky. He has been a history instructor, archivist and community relations associate at U of L since 1968. He is well known as a local historian, as a conductor of local tours and a speaker on state and local history, and as a frequent contributor to radio and television features. An avid proponent of public transit, he rides a bicycle nearly everywhere, and is a board member with the Citizens for Advancement of Regional Transportation.

David Tandy was elected by the Metro Council to serve as District Four Councilman on April 14, 2005. His election followed the passing of Councilman Willie Bright. The Fourth District lies in the former City of Louisville, now the Urban Services District, and covers the Central Business District along with the neighborhoods of Butchertown, California, Germantown, Irish Hill, Meriwether, Original Highlands, Old Louisville, Paristown Pointe, Phoenix Hill, Portland, Russell, Schnitzelburg, Shelby Park and Smoketown. David serves as Of Counsel for the firm of Stoll, Keennon and Park, LLP.

His previous experience includes service as Government Relations Director for the American Cancer Society, Mid-South Division, Inc.; law practice with the firms of Sheffer-Hutchinson-Kinney; Woodward, Hobson, & Fulton; Ortale, Kelly, Hurbert, & Crawford in Nashville, Tennessee; and work in the

Washington D.C. Office of former United States Senator Wendell H. Ford. He also has served as Treasurer for the Kentucky Democratic Party for the last five years.

Ellen Call was elected to the Metro Council in November, 2002, representing District 26. She represents the suburban cities of St. Matthews, Strathmoor Village, Wellington, Kingsley, Meadowview Estates, St. Regis Park, Lincolnshire, Cambridge and Norbourne Estates as well as the neighborhoods of Bon Air and Hikes Point. A Louisville native, Call's school years were marked by academic and sports achievements. Her father, Earl Cox, is one of Kentucky's most honored sports writers. She was an All-Star softball player and state champion tennis player, and lettered in softball all four years at Harvard University, where she graduated cum laude with a degree in American History. After receiving a law degree from the University of Louisville, she worked at a law firm and then clerked for U.S. District Judge John Heyburn.

She also is a former District Director for Congresswoman Anne Northup, and previously served as associate director of corporate communications for Orange County, Calif., and director of media relations for the El Toro Master Development Program in Orange County. She recently helped start a new charity called Operation Open Arms, which takes care of children while their mothers are in prison.

Ron Weston was elected to the Metro Council in November, 2002, representing District 13, and was selected by his colleagues to serve as the Council's first president in 2003. His district includes the suburban cities of Hollyvilla, Minor Lane Heights and South Park View, and the neighborhoods of Fairdale and Leemont Acres. A lifelong resident of Fairdale in southern Jefferson County, Ron is deeply involved in community activities at Fairdale High School, PTAs at three elementary schools, the Fairdale Lions Club and Southern Jefferson Business Association, among others.

Ron is the retired president of Weston Financial Services and is a registered principal as an OSJ for USA Securities. He has served as a registered securities representative for 22 years, a district representative for the Lutheran Brotherhood, a retail business owner, an account executive for Regional Federal Bank, vice-president of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 3-367, a chemical operator with Rohm & Haas Kentucky, and an assembler with the Ford Motor Company.