



IGNITING *annual impact report* AS PARK

Somerset-Pulaski County Economic Development Authority Board of Directors



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On the cover: Brandy Brown, a graduate of Pulaski County's inmate reentry program, who is now employed as a welder with a local manufacturer. *Photo by Allison Horseman*



►► *The Capital of Lake Cumberland achieves another tourism record*

THE YEAR IN HEADLINES

It was another dynamic, exciting year of growth in Somerset-Pulaski County. Here are just a few ways SPEDA ***ignited a spark*** not only in the business community, but in people's lives.

Fourth round of SPEDA mini-grants awarded to local businesses

SPEDA offers free hospitality training to Somerset-Pulaski County employees

Horse Soldier another step closer to home: Construction begins on downtown Somerset dining experience

Hundreds of local students achieve Work Ethic Seal designation at annual luncheon

Somerset High School senior wins SPEDA art contest

Local students rewarded for helping keep community clean

Special Response Team launches Marine 1 to protect the waters of Lake Cumberland



▲ **Lake Cumberland Air Show returns for second year**

Deputy commissioner of KY ED cabinet shares resources, data with local industry leaders at Industrial Leaders Breakfast



SPEDA takes the next step in finding ideas, partners for ag expo center project

Workshop brings community members together to grow local creative economy

Small business owners pack the house for Kentucky Innovation workshop

City water tank murals complete

Free SPEDA workshop offers tips, advice on building an engaged workforce

State's build-ready initiative sees continued growth with new site announced in Pulaski

KARES, an online resource database, now available in Somerset-Pulaski County

9/11 steel to be repurposed in new memorial at Special Response Team headquarters

SPEDA, tourism groups launch advertising effort in Lexington airport

House, Senate leaders from Lake Cumberland region share their legislative goals for Kentucky at breakfast

◄◄ **Stand Up Rural America conference draws economic development professionals from across U.S. to Somerset**

Bus to Biz program connects local educators to workforce needs



SPEDA sells 22 acres to build affordable housing near Valley Oak Complex

Wayfinding projects welcome visitors, raise awareness of local industries

Horse Mania 'Hero Horse' — part of LexArts initiative — returns home to Somerset

SPEDA sells section of commerce park for large-scale commercial, retail development

We've turned the page on another successful year for Somerset and Pulaski County.

It is exciting to see the great things taking place throughout the community, from industrial recruitment, commercial and retail development, to arts and cultural enrichment, tourism visitation, education and workforce development along with an overall quality of life improvement that has never before been seen or experienced here.

SPEDA has been aggressive in supporting and leading the way in many of these initiatives and the continued effort is seeing "The Capital of Lake Cumberland" as an increasingly popular place to visit, work and live.

As you turn through the pages of this report, you will see just a few examples of our holistic approach at work. This is simply a snapshot of the many great things taking place throughout our community and region. You can get an in-depth look on our website, somersetkyleads.com, and we encourage you to explore the information there.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity to lead SPEDA. May we always look for ways to collaborate and help our community reach its fullest potential. As a seventh-generation Pulaski Countian, there is absolutely nowhere else in the world I would rather live, work, play or raise my family. I hope you will feel the same after reviewing this report and learning more about our wonderful community.



Chris Girdler
President + CEO

board of directors



Seth Atwell
Chairman
Partner, EHA CPAs



Michelle Allen
Vice Chair
Director, Somerset-Pulaski County CVB



Forrest Spillman
Treasurer
Educator, Somerset High School



Marshall Todd
Member
Pulaski County Judge-Executive



Alan Keck
Founding Member
Mayor, City of Somerset



Steve Merrick
Member
CEO, Somerset Pellet Fuel



Brook Ping
Founding Member
Developer



Tina Hamm
Member
Co-Founder & CFO, Phoenix Preferred Care



Jeremy Bartley
Legal Counsel
Attorney, Law Office of Jeremy A. Bartley, PSC

s t a f f



Chris Girdler
President & Chief Executive Officer



Jessica Carlton
Chief Financial Officer

team accomplishments



Ameet Patel, third from left, is recognized for his SPEDA board service



Chris Girdler and Secretary of State Michael Adams

President & CEO **Chris Girdler** was recognized as a Commonwealth Ambassador by Kentucky Secretary of State Michael Adams, and was featured in The Lane Report in the Lane One-on-One profile interview.

Chief Accounting Officer **Jessica Carlton** was promoted to chief financial officer and office manager. She completed two grant programs in 2022, including Grant 201 and Growing Grant Readiness.

Communications consultant **Julie Harris** was selected as a member of the 2022 Leadership Kentucky class and graduated from the program.

Carlton and **Harris** were selected as Women of Distinction by Somerset 106/Forcht Broadcasting. **Harris** was recognized in The Lane Report as a Superstar Woman in Business.

Vice Chair **Michelle Allen** was elected to serve a three-year term as an at-large member of the Kentucky Travel Industry Association board of directors.

Outgoing board member **Ameet Patel** was honored for his service on SPEDA's board of directors.

SPEDA once again sponsored the Kentucky Chamber Women's Summit and sent a local delegation that included **Carlton**, **Harris**, and **Allen** as well as **JaKaye Garth**, director of sales and revenue, Thoroughbred Hospitality Group; **Leslie Ikerd**, director, See Somerset Tourism; **Daisha Lile**, executive director, The Virginia; **Hon. Katie Slone**, District Court Judge, Div. II; **Alison Pyles**, director, Burnside Tourism; **Tina Hamm**, SPEDA board member and co-founder/CFO, Phoenix Preferred Care; **Kathy Townsend**, director, Healthy Somerset; **Crystal Cox**, executive director, United Way of South Central Kentucky; and **Tiffany Finley**, executive director, Master Musicians Festival.



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR ▼

When SPEDA was founded, we knew it could change the economic development landscape here forever.

But we didn't envision the ripple effect it could have on the entire Lake Cumberland region, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the nation. Leaders from across the United States have expressed they want to model their community efforts after what we formed.

It is my honor to serve as chair of the SPEDA board of directors and having served as treasurer since its inception. During that time, this organization has accomplished more than anyone thought possible. All the while, we have operated in full transparency and received clean, unqualified annual audit reports issued by our external independent auditors. As a CPA myself, this further demonstrates my pride in this organization's work taking place daily.

SPEDA has completely turned the old economic development model upside down. Our holistic approach has been featured in state and national media as the model of the future. Quite frankly, the model has exceeded our expectations and the results speak for themselves.

As you read through this report, I ask you to join us in looking to the future. It will take all of us working together to accomplish our goals and I look forward to continuing that collaboration in the coming year.

Seth Atwell
Board Chairman

STAND UP
RURAL AMERICA
CONFERENCE ▼

200+

participants from
across the U.S.

LAKE CUMBERLAND AIR SHOW ▼



8,000+
attendees at second event

TOURISM IN SOMERSET-PULASKI COUNTY ►► Another spending record*

« \$137 million »

**Latest data available as of June 2023*



▼ FINANCIAL HEALTH

Fourth clean
audit report

*SPEDA receives praise for staying
blemish-free since inception*



BUS TO BIZ ▼

160+

local teachers attend
industry tours



SOMERSET VETERANS
MEMORIAL PARK ▼

220*

local veterans honored
*ongoing effort



**BY THE
NUMBERS**
a year of achievements



PARTNERSHIPS ▼

1 million

travelers reached through
LEX airport advertisements

when **OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS**



Reentry program offers second chances
to inmates ready to change their lives

Sometimes it isn't what you expect.

Sometimes opportunity sounds like the pounding of a judge's gavel, the cling of a jail cell, and desperation in a child's voice.

For Somerset's Brandy Brown, those sounds were just what she needed to realize she had one last chance to change her life.

In 2019, Brown found herself facing drug charges and a seven-year prison sentence. While angry and devastated at the time, she now looks back on the memory with gratitude after she was given the opportunity to change her life through an innovative inmate reentry program that is a partnership between SPEDA, Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, the Lake Cumberland Area Development District, Somerset Community College (SCC), the Pulaski County Detention Center and several other local organizations.

Through this program, inmates earn technical and soft skills, money and a job to provide them with a foundation for success upon their release. The program has graduated more than a dozen inmates in Somerset-Pulaski County, who are now productive members of society with hope for the future, since its inception in 2019.

Brandy's story

Brown started getting in trouble with the law at the early age of 8. She admittedly did not like authority and was exposed to drug use early in life. In seventh grade, she was expelled from school for selling codeine cough medicine.

"I went to school drunk," Brown said. "I partied a lot by the age of 13 and started selling drugs. I went to a day treatment,

but didn't make it very long."

Between the ages of 13 and 18, Brown said she had seven charges for alcohol intoxication, but a group home setting helped her graduate from high school and enroll in college.

"My first semester of college, I got hooked on heroin and could only support my habit by selling," Brown said. "I did two-and-a-half years of jail time, but Judge (David) Tapp kept trying to help me. He gave me every opportunity he could, but it was up to me and I couldn't do it."

At age 26, Brown was released and doing well. A mom of two, she had lost custody of her kids, but had begun to make progress when she tried fentanyl.

"My final case was trafficking fentanyl," Brown, now 32, admitted. "When I look at my mug shot now, I see how zombie-like I was. My face was picked to death; I was orange. I was near death."

This time, the judge didn't give Brown any more chances and sentenced her to seven years in jail without the ability for parole for at least three-and-a-half years.

"For the first year, I was miserable," Brown said. "I was really sick. I didn't go outside, so I literally slept and ate and tried to read when I could, but couldn't at first because my mind wasn't myself. I just sat. After a while, I begged to go to work, to do something. I finally got sentenced and they let me go to work in the kitchen there."

Motivated by a guard who told her she was "lazy," Brown began working harder and setting goals.

► *Continued on page 11*

GIVING SECOND CHANCES

Somerset-Pulaski County's inmate reentry program has seen significant success since it launched in 2019.

24

graduates with welding certificates

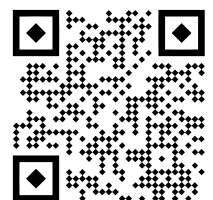
\$1K

Cost to sponsor one inmate to complete the program



Video: Changing lives through the power of work

Scan to watch!





Brandy Brown, front center, enrolled as an inmate in Somerset Community College's reentry program. After earning her welding certificate, she was transported to a local business to work, where she earned a living wage, and was able to save her pay — eventually earning a full-time job there after being released from jail. She's pictured with Brian "Zach" Cook and his son, Tucker, left, and SCC instructors Ashley Phelps, Scott Stringer and Josh Johnson.

"EVEN A KITCHEN DROP WAS SOMETHING I TOOK SERIOUSLY."

... I knew I had a year or two and I knew I had to get it right this time. There were no more chances for me. My kids were getting older and starting to see what I had become."

BRANDY BROWN

Inmate reentry program graduate



"Even a kitchen drop was something I took seriously," she said. "People asked me why and I told them I wanted to get prepared. I started exercising. I tried. I knew I had a year or two and I knew I had to get it right this time. There were no more chances for me. My kids were getting older and starting to see what I had become."

During her sentence, Brown only saw her son a few times on a video visit and didn't hear her daughter's voice for four years. She was desperate for an opportunity.

That opportunity came by way of a work crew. When she proved herself there, another opportunity knocked.

"We were on the road crew when they (guards) asked us if we would be interested in welding," Brown said. "I didn't know what welding was, but I said yes."

Brown and several other inmates enrolled at SCC as part of the inmate reentry program. Through this experience, she not only earned her welding certificate, but she also learned soft skills like how to interview, communicate, solve problems, manage money and have a strong work ethic. She was transported to a local business to work, where she earned a living wage, and was able to save her pay — eventually earning a full-time job there after being released from jail.

"I never had any skills," Brown said. "I didn't think that was something I could ever do. I thought I had run my life into the ground so much that those opportunities were over for me, but I

worked hard and when we went to the job, they would rate us on performance. We (inmates) always scored just as high as anyone else."

Brown and other program attendees took classes at SCC with two guards at their side.

"They treated us normal," Brown said of the guards and her instructor. "They didn't look down on us; they wanted to see us succeed."

And succeed is exactly what Brown did. Now, she works as a full-time welder, living on her own, taking classes as a full-time student at SCC in business administration, and is in the process of getting custody of her children in addition to welcoming a new baby soon. She has been sober for four years and out of jail for eight months.

"Brandy's story is exactly why we created this program," SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said. "Our workforce needs these talented individuals and they need training and encouragement to succeed. Second chances are incredibly powerful, and we must do everything we can to help support those incarcerated men and women looking for a way to improve their lives. I am grateful to every partner involved in making this reentry program possible and continue to be inspired each and every time I see another inmate graduate succeed."

For Brown, seizing the opportunity made all the difference. Her fight will continue.

"I don't ever want to go back to my old life," she said. "I can see the other side." ■

Member organizations speak monthly to inmates at the Pulaski County Detention Center about the reentry program and how it can change lives.





GOD. FAMILY. COUNTRY.

Somerset Veterans Memorial Park gives local family a way to honor, connect with father



Those are three words that Bill, Jim and Tom Clouse use most when talking about their late father Clyde.

“Dad was a man of integrity,” Jim said. “He was simple and didn’t need a lot of flash. He was honest, reliable, and dependable.”

Clyde Clouse was born on Aug. 8, 1921, in Crain’s Nest, Kentucky, near Corbin. He was a musician, an encouraging father to his four sons, a long-time Somerset business owner, a loving husband, and a World War II veteran.

Clyde’s military service was a point of personal pride, something he took seriously. So when Tom first heard about the development of a veteran’s park in downtown Somerset — a partnership between SPEDA and the City of Somerset that included several ways in which local servicemen and women could be honored — he approached his brothers with the idea of doing something unique for their father.

“I heard about the opportunity to purchase a bench at the new veteran’s park,” said Tom. “I looked forward to the challenge of enticing Dad away from the house to see this new park. I believe the concept of a park honoring service to country would have



“HE WOULD HAVE BEEN SHOCKED.

I’m not sure he would have wanted the recognition, but I believe deep down he would have been pleased.”

TOM CLOUSE

Son of military veteran Clyde Clouse, pictured above, who is honored at Somerset Veterans Memorial Park

► Continued on page 14



7

veterans
honored with
trees and
benches

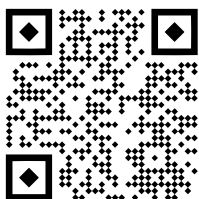


213

veterans honored
with memorial
bricks and on the
Wall of Honor

You can still honor a loved one at Somerset Veterans Memorial Park

Scan to learn how!



pleased him. I can visualize the disbelief on his face when he realized the bench he was sitting on was given in honor of his service. I expect we all would have shed a few tears.”

The three brothers went in together to make arrangements for the bench, even requesting a change in its location so when their father sat, he would be in direct sight of the U.S. flag.

But Clyde Clouse would never see the bench. He died from COVID on July 31, 2022 — just eight days shy of his 101st birthday and eight months before the park would officially open to the public.

“He would’ve been shocked,” Tom said about the bench. “I’m not sure he would have wanted the recognition, but I believe deep down he would have been pleased.”

Now, the bench — which sits facing the flag pole at Somerset Veterans Memorial Park, located on the corner of Oak and Main streets — has a placard that reads “In Memory of Sgt. Clyde Clouse” from his four sons, Mike (deceased), Bill, Jim, and Tom.

Clyde enlisted to be part of the WWII effort, Jim said, even going so far as to have a medical procedure that would allow him to leave stateside and serve overseas. Clyde often talked about his service, about the carnage he witnessed serving under a colonel who performed war autopsies. Clyde served in England, France, and Germany between 1942 and 1946.

Stationed in Germany with the army of occupation, he often found himself walking the same routes. Clyde loved retelling the story of giving a little German girl a piece of gum as he passed by.

“All his life he talked about a child he met in Germany,” Bill said. “She would always run out to him and he would give her a piece of candy or gum, whatever he had. He never stopped wondering what happened to her.”

His caring spirit and impeccable memory are two qualities Clyde’s sons remember fondly about him.

After the war, Clyde came home and began working as an accountant, owning Clouse Bookkeeping and Tax Service for more than 30 years, where his son Mike also worked. He met his wife, Ruth, and they married in 1947. Ruth passed away in 2013.

Clyde was a member of First Methodist Church in Somerset for years. In his later years, he joined First Baptist where his sons Bill and Tom were members.

“His faith was what guided him,” said Bill.

Clyde was the biggest fan of all of his sons. He was a founding member of the Babe Ruth baseball organization in town and encouraged each son to play.

Bill, Jim, and Tom all speak of their father’s routines. He ate the same breakfast, walked the same circles, and did the same things day after day. He was disciplined man who knew the importance of those three important things: God, family, and country.

And while his sons are sad their father never had the chance to see the bench at Somerset Veterans Memorial Park, it was their turn to pay tribute to the man who shaped each of them.

“Dad believed in something bigger. What a legacy to leave.” ■

SOMERSET VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK GRAND OPENING, APRIL 2023



igniting a spark

SPEDA encourages community giving

Foundation raises money for memorials honoring military, first responders

Collaboration and partnership are essential tenets of a successful local economy and to that end, seeking ways in which public and private entities can come together to advance important causes in the community is one way in which SPEDA can enhance those core values.

We developed the SPEDA Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, to do just that — offering a tax-deductible opportunity for residents and businesses to contribute to projects in Somerset-Pulaski County. In this way we further our mission of making business about people.

Current initiatives include fundraising for the Somerset Veterans Memorial Park, which opened to the public in April 2023 (left), and the Special Response Team 9/11 Memorial (below), scheduled to be unveiled in late 2023.

Read more about these projects and how to donate at somersetkyleads.com/speda-community-foundation.



A yellow helicopter with the registration N200DU is parked on a tarmac. The helicopter is viewed from a low angle, emphasizing its size. The background shows a clear blue sky and some airport infrastructure. The text "NEW reaching HEIGHTS" is overlaid on the bottom left of the image. The word "NEW" is in large, bold, white capital letters. The word "reaching" is in a smaller, white, lowercase script font. The word "HEIGHTS" is in large, bold, white capital letters. The entire text is set against a dark, textured background that appears to be the tarmac.

NEW *reaching* HEIGHTS

Lake Cumberland Regional Airport continues to provide essential quality-of-life services



Tony Miller and his crew of 13 air medics are here to take care of people.

“We’re here to do what’s best for the patient,” said Miller, air medical base supervisor for Petroleum Helicopters Inc. (PHI) 7 headquartered at the Lake Cumberland Regional Airport.

But before PHI 7 relocated to the Somerset airport in October 2021, accomplishing that critical mission of patient care could sometimes be a challenge. Lake Cumberland is a 100-acre lake known for its expansive beauty but also its morning fog, which could often delay medical flights from surrounding counties into Somerset. And medical intercepts — where PHI 7 intercepts a patient from emergency medical services and provides faster transport to a comprehensive care facility — were not always possible.

Having home base at an airport has changed all of that, Miller said, and working with the Lake Cumberland Airport board and SPEDA to make it a reality has been “terrific.” Because PHI operates under instrument flight rules — Federal Aviation Administration regulations that govern flight under conditions in which flight by outside visual reference is not safe, instead depending upon flying by reference to instruments in the flight deck — the PHI 7 medical crew can now take off in severe weather conditions because



125

The radius in miles that PHI 7 Medical serves from its home base at the Lake Cumberland Regional Airport. PHI 7 can transport patients to the University of Tennessee, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, and hospitals in Nashville and Cincinnati.

they are departing from a controlled environment with air traffic control and a filed flight plan. And the team — the majority of whom were hired locally — is also better equipped to handle patient intercepts. Now, EMS crews can deliver patients directly to the airport and PHI 7 can take it from there.

One other major benefit to PHI 7's new base: Geographical location.

"It put us in a better position to serve a number of counties just by the fact that (highways) 90 and 27 are the major thoroughfares through the area," Miller said. "You have to come by the airport from some of the outlying counties. Cumberland, Clinton, Wayne, McCreary, all of those counties funnel through there right by the airport."

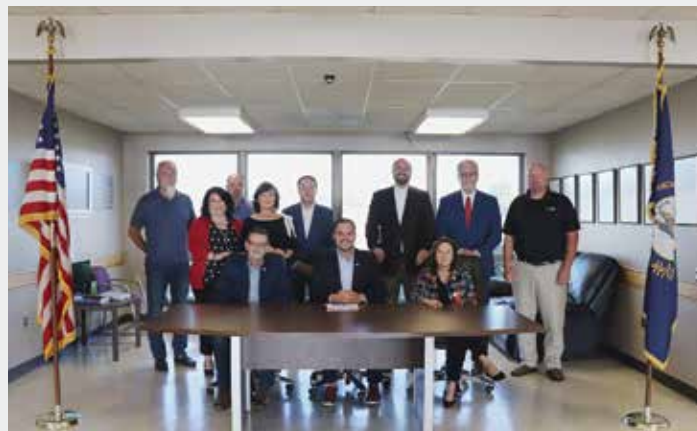
Miller is quick to point out being there for people in the community doesn't just take the form of medical transport for PHI 7. Outreach education — like their Stop the Bleed campaign, for example — is a significant part of what Miller's team provides for the counties PHI 7 serves. These classes, offered for free to community organizations and schools, help teach people what to do in trauma situations before emergency services arrives.

"The people on the ground are the first responders until EMS or fire gets there," Miller said. "Those crucial minutes can make a big difference."

And helping people who find themselves in need of air medical transport services handle the financial impact they can have is one other way PHI 7 can be there for them, Miller said. PHI offers memberships to individuals, families and groups to help offset the often high cost of air medical transport. For \$55 a year, people can purchase a membership that covers themselves, everyone in their household plus three people who aren't immediate family members.

"Even if you have good insurance, you're still faced with co-pays and deductibles," Miller said. "Some bills reach into the tens of thousands of dollars, so this is pretty important."

For more information about PHI and its membership program, visit phicares.com. ■



The mayors of Somerset, London and Corbin, in partnership with their airport boards and economic development authorities, formed a regional alliance in 2020 to bring commercial air service to Lake Cumberland Regional Airport.

igniting a spark

SPEDA continues advocacy efforts for commercial air service

Organization asks legislators to give Lake Cumberland Regional Airport the Essential Air Service designation

SPEDA continues to seek ways to enhance the aviation industry in Somerset-Pulaski County, and being able to provide commercial air service to residents, visitors and business leaders through Lake Cumberland Regional Airport (SME) is an important part of that work.

Three years after leaders in Somerset, Corbin and London signed a memorandum of agreement to make this happen, SPEDA continues pursuing the endeavor at the federal level. Through letters of support and other advocacy efforts, SPEDA has asked federal legislators to transfer the unused Essential Air Service designation at the London-Corbin Airport to SME so airline recruitment efforts here can continue in earnest.

2,170

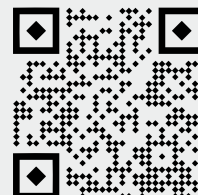
filed flight plans in 2022
for Lake Cumberland
Regional Airport

37

states with flights arriving
from Lake Cumberland
Regional Airport in 2022

Lake Cumberland Regional Airport's impact across the U.S.

Watch an animation of
arrivals/departures in 2022





SOMERSET-PULASKI COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2022 Community Event of the Year

Award recognizes an outstanding event with the purpose of community building and engagement at heart.



60%

increase in attendance from inaugural year to second year of Lake Cumberland Air Show



In 2021, we decided to dream big and take on the enormous task of bringing back an air show to the community.

With the help of a host of unpaid volunteers and community sponsors, the Lake Cumberland Air Show has quickly become one of the region's most anticipated outdoor events. It serves as an important avenue for showcasing the aviation industry and Somerset-Pulaski County's world-class airport.

A partnership between SPEDA, Lake Cumberland Regional Airport and the Somerset-Pulaski County Chamber of

Commerce, the air show not only introduces attendees to a variety of vintage military aircraft and some of the nation's top aerobatic performers, but also serves as an important avenue to salute veterans and highlight aviation and STEM career fields throughout the Commonwealth.

Because of mandated construction to the airport's tarmac that will take place in 2023, the next air show has been scheduled for Sept. 21, 2024.

a little **GOES A LONG WAY**

Mini-grant program helps local businesses
expand and innovate in new ways



\$2,500 may not sound like much. But when it comes to small business, it's nothing to shake a stick at.

"To small businesses, a grant program like SPEDA's is invaluable," said Johnny Flatt, owner of Flatt-Broke Sign Works, who was able to buy a commercial-grade printer for his business with his grant award. "It gives you a leg up or cushion. I don't think it can be overstated how this helps small businesses in the community."

That was exactly the idea, said Chris Girdler, SPEDA's president and CEO. When the new economic development group's leadership learned in 2019 they would be able to save thousands annually through proper fiscal oversight, paying forward that good stewardship was top priority, Girdler said. By returning the savings back into the hands of the business community, SPEDA was able to spur entrepreneurship and strengthen the local economy.

Four \$2,500 mini-grants have been awarded to local small businesses or start-ups since 2020, with a grand total of \$40,000 given to the cause. These businesses have used their grants to improve or purchase new equipment, provide employee training,



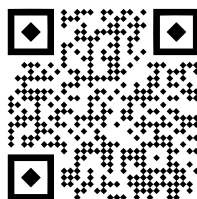
enhance signage or make much-needed facade updates.

No matter what the end use, these cash infusions have ultimately helped these businesses thrive in a competitive environment and provide better service to their customers, giving them growth and learning opportunities along the way.

"To get a business going is very expensive," said Paul Underwood, owner of 19 Kilo Turkey Calls. "I had laid out a one-and-a-half to a two-year timeline for me to do it on my own. When the SPEDA grant came out and I put in for it and was lucky enough to win it, it accelerated the growth of my business ten-fold." ■

▶ Learn more about and apply for the next round of SPEDA mini-grants

Deadline is near the end of February each year, with winners announced in April.



SPEDA MINI-GRANT HALL OF FAME

The following
Somerset-Pulaski County
businesses have been
awarded mini-grants:

2020

MARKET ON MAIN

19 KILO TURKEY CALLS

GET UR SMOKE ON BBQ

BUCK CREEK OUTFITTERS

2021

FLATT-BROKE SIGN WORKS

EPPERSON ENGINEERING

BATTLEFIELD COFFEE CO.

HAMPTON INN SOMERSET

2022

WAKE CUMBERLAND
WATERSPORTS

SOMERSET VISION CENTER

WOODSTOCK LAVENDER CO.

BALLTRIP VOICE STUDIO

2023

THE SUIT SHOPPE

THE EVANS TAVERN & INN

SOUTHERN VINES
WINE SALON

SOMERSET GOINGS
ON PODCAST



bricks THAT BUILD CATHEDRALS



We continue our work to lead **boldly**, building a **vibrant** and **innovative** community through a **growth mindset** in which we make people's lives better each and every day. Whether the work is happening inside or outside SPEDA's walls, every interaction, every **collaboration**, large or small, helps **unite** us in this effort and shows the world we are committed to outstanding **leadership** in Somerset-Pulaski County. *At SPEDA, we are not just laying bricks, we're building cathedrals.*



Top, SPEDA hosted an art contest for local high school students in 2022. The winner, Elia Frazier, center, would assist artist Jordan Justice in painting murals on three water tanks at the City of Somerset's water treatment plant. Abigail Bowers, right, won second place, and Kenny Williams, left, third. Left, SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler and Somerset Mayor Alan Keck speak on a panel at the Kentucky League of Cities Summer Summit. Above left, KLC Executive Director JD Chaney speaks to the SPEDA board of directors during their annual retreat. Above center, Girdler meets with Virginia Dial and Frank Genetti with Connect Community Village, a homeless veterans initiative. Above right, Girdler meets with Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives Joseph Zimmerman, Dan Stoelb, and Marcy Anderson. Opposite page, SPEDA held a number of workshops for business owners, employees and creative entrepreneurs in 2022, including one from KY Innovation, top right, and the Kentucky Small Business Development Center, top left.



Above left, Keck, Girdler and Somerset-Pulaski County Chamber Executive Director Bobby Clue speak to the Leadership Kentucky ELEVATE 2022 class visiting Somerset. Above right, state legislators in the Lake Cumberland area answer questions during the fall SPEDA Industrial Leaders Breakfast. Left, Pulaski County Judge-Executive Marshall Todd, Keck and Girdler in front of a new welcome sign commissioned by SPEDA. Below left, SPEDA and local tourism groups launch an advertising campaign at the Lexington airport. Below center, SPEDA and tourism leaders meet with LexArts President Ame Sweetall and artist Sylvia Cerel-Suhl, who created the Horse Mania horse commissioned by Horse Soldier Bourbon. Below right, Girdler hosts Sen. Mitch McConnell's state director, Robbin Taylor.





Making business about *people*.



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