



Scattered storms; high 85

**CMA AWARDS**

Kenny Chesney leads pack with seven nominations/A6



**POWERFUL WEAPON**

Kicker Tim Masthay 'just booming the ball' for Wildcats/B1

**BIG BANG**

Huge atom smasher passes first test/A4

# MESSENGER-INQUIRER

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**DOWNTOWN OWENSBORO MASTER PLAN**



An artist's rendering shows what Veterans Boulevard could look like after Owensboro's riverfront development project and other work in the downtown area. Illustration by Gateway Planning Group, Inc./Don Oelfie

**THE 9/11 ATTACKS: SEVEN YEARS LATER U.S. sees setbacks, progress against al-Qaida**  
Attacks prompted the war on terror

By Jonathan S. Landay and Saeed Shah  
McClatchy Newspapers

Seven years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, al-Qaida and its allies are gaining ground across the region where the plot was hatched, staging their most lethal attacks yet against NATO forces and posing a growing threat to the U.S.-backed governments in Afghanistan and nuclear-armed Pakistan.

While there have been no new strikes on the U.S. homeland, the Islamic insurrection inspired by Osama bin Laden has claimed thousands of casualties and displaced tens of thousands of people and shows no sign of slackening in the face of history's most powerful military alliance.

The insurgency now stretches from Afghanistan's border with Iran through the southern half of the country. The Taliban are now able to interdict three of the four major highways that connect Kabul, the capital, to the rest of the country.

"I am not convinced we are winning it in Afghanistan," Adm. Michael Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, conceded Tuesday.

Experts inside and outside the U.S. government agreed that a key reason for the resurgence is a growing popular sympathy for the militants because of over-reliance on the use of force, especially airpower, by NATO has killed hundreds of civilians.

On Wednesday, Pakistan's military chief, Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, warned that cross-border U.S. missile strikes and commando raids will no longer be tolerated. "The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country will be defended at all cost," he said.

Mullen said he is examining "a new, more comprehensive strategy for the region," an acknowledgement that the current approach lacks coordinated reconstruction and humanitarian programs.

"We cannot kill our way to victory," said Mullen, who warned that the United States and its allies "are running out of time."

See **Al-Qaida/Page A2**

## Group unveils designs

Community sees first drafts, but funding not yet in place

By Owen Covington  
Messenger-Inquirer

Members of the community got a glimpse Wednesday of the first drafts of a grand scheme for downtown Owensboro designed to marry the current riverfront development project with a renewed city core.

That city core could be home to an outdoor stadium taking up four city blocks, a new hotel and convention center and a pedestrian-friendly waterfront district that combines residential, retail and office space.

The Gateway Planning Group, which unveiled the ideas at the RiverPark Center, was hired by local government and

**"This is about what we want and what we need. The implementation piece is coming in November. That's when we'll marry some firm numbers with the design. ... This is not 'pie in the sky' stuff."**

— Nick Brake  
president of the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corp.

members of the business and economic development communities to complete a master plan that includes potential designs for how downtown should develop along with an implementation plan to encourage and guide that development.

This week has been about the design,

with the work on how to pay for the projects and encourage development to come later, said Nick Brake, president of the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corp., which is helping fund the initiative.

That doesn't mean the design isn't

rooted in reality, Brake said.

"This is about what we want and what we need," Brake said. "The implementation piece is coming in November. That's when we'll marry some firm numbers with the design. ... This is not 'pie in the sky' stuff."

The Gateway group spelled out two development scenarios, both of which are centered around an outdoor events center coupled with a downtown hotel and convention center.

But what set the two scenarios apart is where these catalyst projects will be located, with the sites determined by

See **Designs/Page A2**

## Environmentalists urge curbside recycling

They plan to petition Daviess Fiscal Court

By James Mayse  
Messenger-Inquirer

An environmental group organized after last year's "We The People" town meeting will petition Daviess Fiscal Court to consider starting a curbside recycling program.

Environmental Impact Council members plan to speak at the

Sept. 18 Fiscal Court meeting at the county courthouse. Jon Cambron, co-chairman of the group, said the group wants county officials to solicit proposals from companies that would like to offer a countywide curbside recycling program.

The recommendation comes after months of study by the

council members.

"What we've done is collect data (from) different cities and counties around Kentucky that are doing recycling," Cambron said. The group also met with representatives from companies interested in providing a curbside program.

"There are multiple cities, both large and small, that are doing it," Cambron said.

During the "We The People"

event last November, 75 percent of the 600 participants said expanding recycling opportunities in the county was the community's top environmental priority.

Cambron said when examining recycling programs in other communities, the group considered factors such as the cost to residents for the program and whether curbside recycling was profitable to the company provid-

ing the service.

"Bowling Green, being a similar sized city ... (the provider is) making an excellent profit and providing a kickback to the county," Cambron said. In Bowling Green's case, the company providing the service makes a profit from selling recycled items and through a mandatory recycling fee charged to residents.

See **Curbside/Page A2**

**WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY-OWENSBORO CAMPUS**

## Earthwork for campus almost finished

County funding project

By James Mayse  
Messenger-Inquirer

Site work for the Western Kentucky University-Owensboro campus is nearly complete, and county officials hope construction crews will be ready to start work on the first campus building this fall.

The plan is to have the first county-financed building ready

for classes by January 2010. But county officials said when future campus buildings will be constructed is largely up to the state.

Daviess Fiscal Court is paying to construct the first administration/classroom building for the Western campus, which is across from Owensboro Community & Technical College on U.S. 231.

See **Campus/Page A2**



John Dunham, Messenger-Inquirer

## Ex-Big E owner files suit on insurance claim

Blaze damaged hotel

By Owen Covington  
Messenger-Inquirer

The former owner of the Executive Inn Rivermont is suing its insurance company, claiming it was never paid under its policy for business lost after a September 2006

fire at the hotel.

Minnesota/Owensboro Executive Inn filed the lawsuit against Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Co. last week in Daviess Circuit Court and is seeking unspecified damages.

See **Insurance/Page A2**

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**Daviess County** inmates Matt Bolen, left, and Jerry Fugate wait as a gravel base is poured for drainage pipe Wednesday by Bob Root of the Daviess County landfill. The men were working at the Western Kentucky University-Owensboro campus parking lot across from Owensboro Community and Technical College on U.S. 231.

# Designs: Response positive

From the **Front Page**

whether the Executive Inn Rivermont property can be factored into the overall design.

Absent the integration of the 17 acres where the closed hotel currently sits, the outdoor stadium could be built west of Locust Street between West Second and West Fourth streets.

That plan called for a hotel and convention center to straddle West Second Street on the west side of Frederica Street and a large parking area between those facilities and the stadium.

If the Executive Inn property is included in the mix, those three projects would be located on the hotel's current plot of land and integrated into a new Smothers Park and Veterans Boulevard.

Michael Huston, an Owensboro native who is working with Fort Worth, Texas-based Gateway, said the size of the stadium — four city blocks — presents challenges regardless of where it is placed. "There are issues with property acquisition regardless of where you put it," Huston said.

Though there was a strong push for a baseball or outdoor events stadium by some members of the community several years ago, much of the dialogue by city officials in the past year has centered on an indoor mixed-use facility to replace the aging Sportscenter.

But a survey of about 150 community members at Monday night's first public session of the design week found that 72 percent supported an outdoor stadium. There was no question about an indoor mixed-use facility.

East of Frederica Street, the emphasis would be on creating a waterfront district that could be set aside by different street materials and different lighting that encourage a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

A rendering showed three-

and four-story buildings along Veterans Boulevard butted up against wide sidewalks that would combine retail on the first story, offices on a second and then riverfront condos on the top levels.

Part of the goal has been to create a connection between the downtown district and the new riverfront development that includes the expansion of Smothers Park, Gateway President Scott Polikov said.

The team has met with designers from EDSA, which created the riverfront development plans, and has embraced the overall Smothers Park design that includes a "signature" playground that Polikov likened to an "outdoor museum" for children.

Paul Kissinger of EDSA said after the meeting that he was pleased to see the momentum with the riverfront project continuing in the same direction.

"Owensboro is years ahead (of other communities) in achieving a riverfront and a downtown riverfront district," Kissinger said. "The integrity (of the design) is still there."

Both plans call for the block near the river between Frederica and St. Ann streets to be opened up as a plaza and potential home to an outdoor farmers market.

The team expects to take the input from the crowd Wednesday, which was largely positive, and work it into the designs they presented. At noon Friday, the next draft of the plan will be presented at the RiverPark Center. It will include recommendations for reworking the downtown traffic system and developing Frederica Street as a street car corridor.

This week's work will be reviewed and refined over the next several months before it is presented to the community in a more finalized format Nov. 15.

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# Al-Qaida: Some extremists fled, regrouped

From the **Front Page**

White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said efforts to capture or kill bin Laden haven't been without "ups and downs." But, she added, the failure to find him says "a lot about the geography ... where al-Qaida decides to hide. And as the president says, Osama bin Laden is not out there leading any parades."

Al-Qaida and the Taliban, the Islamist militia that harbored bin Laden while it ruled Afghanistan, were quickly defeated by U.S. airstrikes and opposition forces directed by CIA officers and U.S. commandos after the 9/11 attacks.

But many extremists fled and regrouped in Pakistan's remote tribal region, in part because Bush declined to use U.S. troops to block escape routes and began diverting resources for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Afghans have voted since then in democratic elections, enjoyed greater rights than ever before and seen the construction of schools, clinics, roads and other infrastructure with billions of dollars in international aid.

The United States and its allies have killed and captured thousands of al-Qaida and Taliban fighters, including senior and mid-level leaders.

But bin Laden and his inner circle have established new bases inside Pakistan, where they plotted deadly attacks in London and Madrid, and where U.S. intelligence officials say they're now plotting attacks and training recruits. So have Taliban leader Mullah Omar and his lieutenants, who U.S. officials said have been aided by sympathetic Pakistani military and intelligence officers.

With U.S. forces stretched by the war in Iraq, NATO allies unwilling to commit large numbers of soldiers and the Afghan security forces unable to operate independently, U.S. commanders have too few men to contain the revival of the Taliban and its allies.

There are now about 62,000 foreign soldiers in Afghanistan, including 34,000 U.S. troops, and 150,000 Afghan security forces. They face an estimated 7,000 to 11,000 insurgents, according to U.S. commanders.

Though the guerrillas are no match for U.S.-led NATO forces, U.S. commanders are unable to hold areas cleared of insurgents long enough to establish strong Afghan government control and pursue large-scale development programs.

This year the Taliban have carried out their most lethal attacks against foreign troops, launching coordinated strikes in different areas that combine regular attackers and suicide bombers.

The most serious came last month when over a two-day period, the insurgents hit a major U.S. base in eastern Afghanistan with at least 10 suicide bombers and a ground force and ambushed a French-Afghan patrol near Kabul. At least 10 elite French paratroopers were killed and 21 injured, the worst loss of NATO troops in a single incident.

Despite killing many more civilians than the allies have, the insurgents are also winning the all important "information war" for the hearts and minds of the region's deeply religious Muslims, U.S. military officials conceded.

The insurgents' sophisticated propaganda machinery exaggerates civilian casualties caused by foreign forces and reinforces perceptions fueled by U.S. abuses against captured detainees that the Bush administration is waging a war against Islam.

Pakistan has seen an explosion in extremist violence follow-



Associated Press

The World Trade Center site is shown Wednesday night in New York.

# Delays plague New York memorial

By **Stevenson Swanson**  
Chicago Tribune

Although memorials to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks are opening at the Pentagon and in Boston in time for today's seventh anniversary, the first of the steel girders that will support the largest memorial to the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history were only recently lowered into place in New York, marking the long-delayed beginning of construction at the World Trade Center site where nearly 2,800 people were killed.

The National September 11 Memorial, two massive square waterfalls set within the footprints of the Twin Towers, was to have opened next year. Now, officials are aiming to have the memorial ready in time for the 10th anniversary in 2011.

Diane Parks, who lost her son Ryan Fitzgerald in the attacks, is skeptical.

"I see the pictures of what they are going to build, and it looks lovely," said Parks, who attended a gathering of 9/11 family members Wednesday at a hotel near ground zero. "But as I walked here, all I saw was a hole in the ground. It's been exactly a year since I was down here, and I don't see a difference."

Parks is far from alone in voicing frustration at the slow pace, and the memorial is hardly the only project at

ground zero that has languished.

The steel for Freedom Tower, the site's signature skyscraper envisioned as soaring 1,776 feet high, has barely risen about street level, despite the laying of a cornerstone in 2004 and commencement of foundation work in 2006.

And architect Santiago Calatrava's birdlike transportation hub for PATH commuter trains, projected to cost \$3.5 billion and featuring a two-part roof that was supposed to open like wings, has not gotten off the ground. To control costs, the Port Authority, the transportation agency that owns ground zero, has decided to build the roof without the equipment that would allow it to open.

With blown deadlines and ballooning cost estimates, New York's Mayor Michael Bloomberg called Wednesday for an end to excuses regarding the lack of progress in rebuilding the 16-acre site in lower Manhattan.

"Progress on the redevelopment of the World Trade Center has been frustratingly slow, owing in large part to a multi-layered governance structure that has undermined accountability from the get-go," he wrote in an opinion piece in The Wall Street Journal. "The memorial must be completed by the 10th anniversary. No more excuses, no more delays."

# Campus: Work progresses

From the **Front Page**

The \$6.1 million building will include computer labs, distance learning classrooms and faculty offices as well as the campus administration. Western Kentucky University has agreed to staff the campus.

The goal of the campus is to increase the number of county residents holding bachelor's degrees. The idea is for students to receive their associate's degrees at OCTC and to finish the classes needed for a bachelor's degree at the Owensboro Western campus.

At a city work session this week, Daviess County Judge-Executive Reid Haire told city commissioners the dirt work is being completed by county landfill crews as a way to reduce the cost of the project.

County Senior Project Engineer Joey Fischer said the site should be ready for construction in the next two weeks.

"I'd say we're probably 95 percent (done) on the rough end of the dirt work," Fischer said. "... We're doing the storm drains this week."

Landfill Manager Robbie Hocker said landfill crews will sow the site with grass seed next week. Once the site work is complete, county workers will resume work expanding the county landfill. The landfill work was postponed so crews could prepare the campus for construction.

"Hopefully, if we get them back next week or in two weeks ... we should have the new (landfill) cell done by winter," Hocker said. The expansion will not be ready for use this year; Hocker said landfill crews will start lining the expansion with clay next spring.

County officials had budgeted \$5.2 million for construction of the first campus building. Architects' fees and additional costs, such as paving for the building parking lot, make up the rest of the \$6.1 million total cost.

Other campus buildings will be constructed over a 20- to 25-year period, Haire told city commissioners. "It's going to take a long time to do," Haire said.

About \$8 million in funding for future campus work is expected to come from Phase II funding for the Advanced Technology Center at OCTC. Local officials have attempted to have Phase II funded in the state budget for the past three state General Assembly sessions. But in 2006, then-Gov. Ernie Fletcher vetoed the project, and state legislators have been unable to agree to fund the project over the past two sessions.

Haire said the county does not have the funding to finance additional buildings.

"We lose a lot with having that (first) building open and not having that second building

# "Governor (Steve) Beshear has stated one of his goals in his term is to get the Advanced Technology Center (funding) approved."

— Reid Haire  
Daviess County  
judge-executive

under construction," Haire said. But Fiscal Court is "not in the position" to finance a second building, Haire said.

"Governor (Steve) Beshear has stated one of his goals in his term is to get the Advanced Technology Center (funding) approved," Haire said. "... I don't think we have a lot of alternatives but to wait for state government to do what they've promised to do."

Haire said he has received suggestions about holding a campaign for private donations for a second building but said he did not think such an effort would raise the required revenue.

"The basic issue people come up with is, 'That's what I pay taxes for — for public education,'" Haire said.

County Commissioner Mike Riney said he is not aware of any alternative source of funding for the campus that could replace state funds.

"I'm waiting on the state to do what it needs to make it happen," Riney said. "... I'm confident the governor is doing everything he can, and I have all the faith in the world he's going to make that happen."

"But as far as raising additional funding in the community, I can't get too excited about it," Riney said.

State Rep. Jim Glenn, an Owensboro Democrat, said he would work to get funding for the Western campus and Advanced Technology Center in future sessions. Glenn is facing Republican Ben Boorman in the November election.

"We're going to work on it again," Glenn said. "The Advanced Technology Center is currently in the budget, but it's unfunded."

Legislators will not discuss passing a new budget until 2010. But legislators could enact a budget amendment to fund projects that were not funded in the 2008-10 state budget. The state's revenue shortfall will likely make passing a budget amendment difficult, Glenn said.

"I don't know if I'll be able to do a budget amendment, because the funding is so tight," Glenn said. "... We will continue to pursue it, I can tell you that point blank."

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# Curbside: Options vary

From the **Front Page**

"Bowling Green is doing it for under \$3 per month per household," Cambron said. The fee is mandatory, but Warren County residents in low-income housing and people who prove they can't afford the service have their recycled items picked up for free, Cambron said.

Cindy Bornander, co-chairwoman of the Environmental Impact Council, said other small Kentucky cities that offer curbside recycling include Elizabethtown, Leitchfield and Henderson. Bornander said the group favors a mandatory recycling program.

When asked why there was such support for curbside recycling at the "We The People" forum, Bornander said, "because when you think of curbside recycling, you think of a progressive community."

"People that move here from other areas that had curbside recycling, they kind of scratch their heads and say, 'Why not?'" Bornander said.

Funding options for the pro-

gram could vary. The program could be financed by monthly fees paid by county residents or could be partly covered by county government, Bornander said. A mandatory program has the best chance for success, Bornander said.

"Any time you make it compulsory ... it is going to make a big increase in recyclables (being collected) and a decrease in the number going into the landfill," Bornander said. "... We'd like to see countywide curbside recycling, which includes the city, of course."

Companies that met with the group expressed an interest in offering the program, Bornander said. "There is one (company) that is ready to go, once the county approves it," Bornander said.

Cambron said a curbside program would be "an easy way to be green in your household."

"I think it feels like a moral obligation to the land" and extends the life of the landfill, Cambron said.

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From the **Front Page**

The corporation is also asking the court to grant its claim for reimbursement for expenses from upgrading portions of the hotel to meet building codes and other codes that it says should have been covered under its policy.

Attorney Mike Fiorella is representing Minnesota/Owensboro Executive Inn and declined to comment further on the lawsuit or disclose details of the claim. Representatives for Philadelphia Indemnity did not respond to requests for comments on the lawsuit.

The lawsuit claims that after the Sept. 2, 2006, fire at the Executive Inn Rivermont, the damage to the hotel caused the owner to lose income while incurring business expenses it wouldn't have had it not been for the fire.

Before the fire, the hotel on Owensboro's riverfront had almost 600 rooms available for use on the 17-acre complex. The fire damaged 242 rooms in the building's western wing, and Minnesota/Owensboro Executive Inn hired Disaster Team Inc. to help clean up from the blaze.

In January 2007, Disaster Team Inc. filed a lawsuit after completing its work and going months without payment, and eventually settled the lawsuit for \$1.45 million five months later.

But by then the lawsuit had evolved to include a foreclosure motion by the hotel's mortgage holder, Marshall Investments, and a dispute over the insurance settlement offer worked out by Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Co.

Philadelphia Indemnity has proposed to settle the fire damage claim for \$5.4 million, but Marshall Investments had refused to sign off on the settlement agreement.

The dispute over the insurance claim to cover the damages to the property from the fire was settled in August, but details of the settlement were not disclosed.

The hotel went into receivership this spring, and by May, receiver Steven Baer reported to the court that occupancy rates were running as low as 6 percent during the week and the hotel was struggling to meet its payroll obligations.

The lawsuit ended with the transfer of ownership to Marshall Investments on June 9, and the hotel was closed the same day.

Marshall Investments has hired the brokerage firm CB Richard Ellis to market the property, but details about how they plan to find a new owner for the property have not been available from either Marshall Investments or CB Richard Ellis.

The city and county governments have made an effort to purchase the property but have thus far been unsuccessful.

Minnesota/Owensboro Executive Inn is now facing administrative dissolution by the Kentucky Secretary of State's Office for not filing an annual report this year and is considered in bad standing by the state.

The corporation was administratively dissolved in 2006 by the state for the same reason, and that dissolution can affect its ability to do business in the state.

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