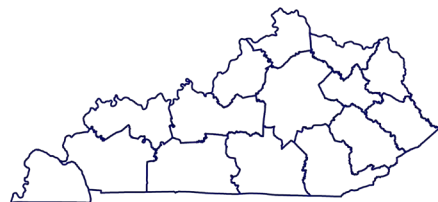


THE REGIONALIST



A PUBLICATION OF THE KENTUCKY COUNCIL OF AREA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

ISSUE 18 • JUNE 2025

Legislators hear from officials on ADD impact

BY MOLLY HAINES
KCADD Public Information Officer

Local officials from across Kentucky appeared before the Interim Joint Committee on Local Government June 24 to reaffirm the critical role of the Commonwealth's 15 Area Development Districts (ADDs) in fostering regional collaboration, supporting economic development, and strengthening local government capacity.

"We are focused on regional priorities—that is, for the greater good of all of our cities and counties collectively—and act as one team," said Daniel London, executive director of the Lincoln Trail Area Development District. "We serve as that Swiss Army knife for our cities and counties, being agile and adaptable to whatever regional requirement, need, and priority is set by our board of directors."

Created by executive order in 1967, Kentucky's ADDs assist communities with planning, grant writing, aging services, and more. London emphasized the cooperative nature of the districts. "Each ADD doesn't race to compete with the other," he said. "We're able to pull resources together—public, private, or otherwise—to leverage opportunity for our regions."

Local leaders testified that many major projects would not be possible without ADD support. In Madisonville, a \$25 million sewer upgrade, a police academy, and a collegiate aviation training program were all aided by the Pennyriple Area Development District.



Seated left to right: Rowan County Judge/Executive Harry Clark, Madisonville Mayor Kevin Cotton and Webster County Judge/Executive Steve Henry testify before the Interim Joint Committee on Local Government June 24.

"We would not be able to do what we do as local governments without the resources of the ADDs," said Madisonville Mayor Kevin Cotton. "This organization brings together all entities and leaders for one common good."

Webster County Judge/Executive Steve Henry highlighted the direct community impact, noting that in fiscal year 2024, ADDs helped deliver more than 2.2 million home meals and coordinated more than 250,000 transportation trips statewide.

Rowan County Judge/Executive Harry Clark described a \$60 million water treatment project, a decade in the mak-

ing, that now serves eight counties. "Without their assistance, there's no doubt we would not have a water treatment plant," he said of the Gateway Area Development District.

Despite their impact, ADDs face challenges—particularly in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. While districts have adopted creative strategies to stay competitive, concerns remain about long-term staffing.

Officials concluded by urging continued support for Joint Funding Administration dollars to maintain the essential services ADDs provide in all 120 Kentucky counties.



Kentucky Housing Authority Deputy Director Wendy Smith, far left, leads the Barren River Area Development District's CEDS Summit keynote session May 19. Participating in the session were, from left, State Rep. Kevin Jackson, State Sen. Stephen Meredith and State Rep. Michael Meredith.

BRADD hosts annual CEDS Summit

The Barren River Area Development District (BRADD) hosted its 2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Summit on May 19 at the Cave City Convention Center, drawing more than 120 participants from across the region.

The event brought together local leaders, community stakeholders and development professionals to discuss strategies for strengthening south central Kentucky's economy through coordinated planning, infrastructure investment and community resilience.

This year's keynote session featured a legislative panel focused on housing, one of the region's most pressing development challenges. Attendees also participated in breakout sessions



Auburn Mayor Mike Hughes participates in a CEDS Summit session.

aligned with regional and county-level strategic goals.

The public is invited to visit planning.bradd.org/2025-ceds-summit for a full recap of the event, including session materials, event photos and information on BRADD's ongoing planning efforts.

FIVCO announces release of 3-year strategic plan

The FIVCO Area Development District has released its new three-year Strategic Plan, outlining priorities to guide regional growth through 2028. Developed with input from leaders and stakeholders, the plan emphasizes collaboration, improved services and eco-

nomics development across FIVCO's five counties. It also highlights strategies to build resilience and address future challenges. This roadmap reflects FIVCO's commitment to innovation, accountability and community impact. View the full plan at fivco.org.

ADDs receive Brownfields grants nearing \$1.7 million

Two Kentucky Area Development Districts have received nearly \$1.7 million in federal funding to support the cleanup and redevelopment of underused properties.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently awarded \$18.8 million in Brownfields Grants to 23 recipients in its Southeast Region, including six in Kentucky. Among them are the Gateway Area Development District (GADD) and the Cumberland Valley Area Development District (CVADD).

CVADD will lead a \$1.2 million Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant to benefit Bell, Clay, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Laurel, Rockcastle and Whitley counties. Funding will support 30 Phase I and 15 Phase II environmental site assessments; eight cleanup plans; eight reuse assessments; three revitalization plans; and community engagement in Lynch, Benham and Cumberland.

GADD has received a \$500,000 EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant. The funds will support 10 Phase I and three Phase II site assessments, three cleanup plans, Brownfield site inventories, reuse planning and outreach across Bath, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan and Rowan counties. Target communities include Salt Lick, Frenchburg, Mount Sterling, West Liberty and Morehead.

"Gateway Area Development District is honored to receive a \$500,000 EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant to support the revitalization of properties," said GADD Executive Director Joshua Farrow. "The program is essential to expanding the local tax base, attracting private investment and supporting our region's growing tourism economy."

EPA officials say the Brownfields Program plays a key role in helping communities safely redevelop environmentally challenged properties while promoting public health, economic development and long-term sustainability.

Reflecting on successful outreach

As we close out the fiscal year, I want to take a moment to highlight one of our most effective tools in recent legislative outreach: the tailored one-pagers KCADD developed and distributed ahead of the 2025 General Assembly.

Created in partnership with all 15 Area Development Districts, these concise, district-specific documents illustrated the local impact of key federal and state programs—from aging services to infrastructure and economic development. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Several lawmakers shared the one-pagers on social media, helping to spotlight the essential work being done by ADDs across the Commonwealth.

This success reinforces the value of clear, localized data when engaging with policymakers. To build on that momentum, KCADD will begin statewide data collection on July 1 to support a new round of one-pagers for the 2026 session—refined and ready well ahead of the next General Assembly.

During our June meeting, Council members approved the February minutes and reviewed a favorable financial report. We also shared updates on advocacy efforts and outlined next steps for data collection and communications enhancements. As always, the meeting reflected our shared commitment to serving Kentucky's communities with efficiency and impact.

Thank you for your continued collaboration. The unified efforts of our ADDs ensure we remain a strong, credible voice for local and regional progress across the Commonwealth.



CASEY ELLIS



Christian County Judge/Executive Jerry Gilliam and Pennyriple Area Development District (PeADD) Board Chair Crissy Carter present Planters Bank CEO Elizabeth McCoy and Planters Bank President Kelley Workman with the John C. Mahre Regionalism Award at PeADD's 56th annual meeting June 9.

PeADD celebrates 56 years of regional impact at annual meeting

BY MELISSA THOMPSON

PeADD Communications Director

The Pennyriple Area Development District (PeADD) held its 56th annual dinner meeting Monday, June 9, at The Bruce Convention Center in Hopkinsville, celebrating more than half a century of regional collaboration, economic growth and community impact across western Kentucky.

With the theme "There's No Place Like the Pennyriple," the evening highlighted discovery, resilience and the spirit of coming home—symbolizing the partnerships and perseverance that have defined the region's success. The event brought together local leaders, public officials, regional partners and community members for a night of recognition and reflection.

During the event, PeADD presented several service awards to board members and staff, and honored the legacy of regional cooperation with the John C. Mahre Regionalism Award, named in memory of Mahre, a lifelong advocate for community advancement and regional unity.

Elizabeth McCoy and Planters Bank were named the 2025 recipients of the Mahre award. Under McCoy's leadership, the bank has become a driving

force for regional prosperity, going beyond traditional financial services to invest in community development, philanthropy and regional collaboration. PeADD praised McCoy and her team for exemplifying the ideals of shared progress that Mahre championed.

"Elizabeth McCoy and Planters Bank have consistently demonstrated that when one part of our region thrives, we all benefit," said Christian County Judge/Executive Jerry Gilliam. "Their work has built bridges across boundaries and created opportunities that strengthen our entire region."

The keynote address was delivered by Melody Warnick, a nationally recognized author and expert on place attachment and community engagement. Warnick, author of *This Is Where You Belong* and *If You Could Live Anywhere*, offered insights on how communities can attract, retain and inspire residents in an increasingly mobile and remote-work world. Her remarks aligned with the evening's themes of connection, belonging and growth.

The event was sponsored by Planters Bank of Hopkinsville, whose continued support of regional development efforts reflects the spirit of the evening's celebration.

KRADD hosts Disaster Recovery Capstone Exercise

The Kentucky River Area Development District hosted its second Disaster Recovery Capstone Exercise on June 18 at the Mayor Charles Long Conference Center.

KRADD was joined by a strong group of partners, including Nesbitt Engineering, Kentucky Emergency Management, the Kentucky Department for Public Health, the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the Division of Water, the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection and many other local and regional stakeholders.

The Disaster Recovery Plan, funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission, supported the six-hour hands-on exercise focused on enhancing multi-county coordination, resource sharing and strengthening public health systems, utility services and overall disaster response operations.

Participants worked through com-



plex scenarios that required strategic thinking and collaboration to identify real-world solutions for mitigating disasters across the region.

Exercises like this are key to ensuring communities are prepared, connected and resilient when it matters most.



Officials unite to tackle flood risks

Local officials, emergency managers, and floodplain professionals gathered June 16 for the Kentucky Flooding Tools Awareness Workshop, hosted by the Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD). The event, held in partnership with the Kentucky Silver Jackets and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, focused on strengthening flood preparedness and resilience across the Central Region.

Expert presentations were delivered by Alex VanPelt, Kentucky's National

Flood Insurance Program coordinator; Brandon Brummett and Jonathan Matthews of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Michael Kochasic of the National Weather Service; and Pete Cinotto of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Attendees received guidance on flood mitigation best practices, FEMA flood maps, stream statistics, flooding scenarios, and national water dashboards, along with federal and state tools to better plan for and respond to flood risks.

NKADD, Local 12 to host NKY Community Day

More than 1,000 people attended last year's Northern Kentucky Community Day, and organizers hope to maintain that momentum at this year's event, scheduled for noon to 3 p.m. EDT Thursday, July 31, at Turfway Park, 7500 Turfway Road, Florence, KY 41042.

Sponsored by the Northern Kentucky Area Development District and Local 12, the event is tailored to adults 50 and older, caregivers and families. This year's event will expand its offerings with free health screenings, live TV coverage and more than 50 community exhibitors focused on health, aging, financial wellness, transportation, housing and support services for seniors.

Highlights include free health screenings and wellness checks, resources on aging in place, Medicare and caregiving, local job and volunteer opportunities for older adults, free giveaways, entertainment and appearances by Local 12 personalities.



Justin Colley with the Purchase Area Development District snaps a photo with a participant in the Purchase ADD Elder Abuse Awareness event.

Annual Elder Abuse Awareness Event held at Purchase ADD

The Purchase Area Development District (Purchase ADD) Elder Abuse Council recently held its annual Elder Abuse Awareness Event, rotating locations each year to engage different counties in the Purchase area. This year's event was a successful collaboration among community partners, service providers, and advocates, aimed at raising awareness and offering resources to prevent elder abuse.

Led by the Purchase ADD Ombudsman, the event featured bingo, door

prizes, and giveaways focused on elder abuse awareness, with local nursing facilities providing ice cream and vendors setting up resource tables.

A key moment was a presentation by Graves County Chief Deputy Jeremy Prince on the rise of elder fraud and protective measures for community members. Senior programs from Hickman and Marshall counties participated, highlighting the community-driven effort. Overall, the event continues to make a significant impact in combating elder abuse.

GRADD senior centers receive 'veteran friendly' designation

Earlier this year, the Green River Area Development District's senior centers participated in the Veteran-Friendly Senior Center Program organized by the Department for Aging and Independent Living. The training equips senior centers to serve as ambassadors for veterans, helping them connect to the benefits they deserve. The senior centers received their certificates at the June 3 Green River Council on Aging meeting.



Lunch and Learn event held at BTADD



The Buffalo Trace Area Agency on Aging and Independent Living hosted a Lunch and Learn June 13 in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Attendees gained valuable insight and knowledge from speakers Maj. Chris Conley with the Maysville Police Department, Maysville Police Department social worker Ashley Messer and Commonwealth's Attorney for the 19th Circuit Johnathan Gay.

UPCOMING AGING EVENTS

Aging conference set for Aug. 21 in Purchase ADD

The Purchase Area Development District, in partnership with the Purchase Area Mental Health and Aging Coalition, will host its annual aging conference from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. CDT, Thursday, Aug. 21, at the Filbeck-Cann Life Celebration Center, 1003 Poplar St., in Benton.

This 1960s-themed event will feature interactive presentations from professionals focused on healthy aging, along with bingo, a costume contest, a food drive and take-home resources. Attendees will enjoy a fun, informative day designed to support and celebrate the aging journey in the Purchase area.

Expanding workforce opportunities in rural Kentucky

Bluegrass ADD launches second special initiative

BY STACI MAY

BGADD Public Information Officer

The Bluegrass Area Development District's (BGADD) Department of Workforce Services continues its commitment to rural workforce development with the completion of its second special initiative: a fully funded nurse aide training program for job seekers in Garrard and Lincoln counties.

Offered through a partnership between the Kentucky Career Center–Bluegrass/American Job Center (KCC-B) and Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC), the 8-week course targeted young adults ages 18–24. Participants gained hands-on training in essential areas such as communication, infection control, safety, residents' rights, and basic nursing procedures. Graduates are now eligible to take the State Registered Nurse Aide (SRNA) certification exam, unlocking immediate employment opportunities



Graduates of the nurse aide training program for job seekers in Garrard and Lincoln counties.

in healthcare.

All program costs—including tuition, textbooks, scrubs, shoes, supplies, and the SRNA exam—were fully covered by the Career Center.

"Serving job seekers across our 17-county region is at the heart of our mission," said Jennifer Hayes of KCC-Bluegrass. "Our partnership with BCTC has made the upskilling process

seamless, especially through this Lincoln/Garrard County Nurse Aide Initiative."

BCTC tailored the course schedule and campus location to meet students' needs, ensuring the program was accessible and convenient. Together, these partners are creating clear pathways to meaningful healthcare careers for young adults in rural Kentucky.

Tornado victims assisted by Cumberlands Workforce team



The Cumberlands Workforce team from the Lake Cumberland Area Development District (LCADD) was on-site in London, Kentucky, June 10–12, with its fully staffed Unemployment Insurance RV. The team assisted residents affected by recent tornadoes whose employment was disrupted, as well as others seeking job opportunities, free training, and support in overcoming employment barriers. Unemployment Insurance services were also provided. Joining the effort were representatives from the Kentucky Career Center-Cumberlands, the Team Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet's Reentry and Employment Services Branch, and a veterans employment counselor. LCADD extends special thanks to Myra Wilson, executive director of Cumberlands Workforce and the Cumberlands Workforce Investment Board, for her leadership and continued support.

Ky. Secretary of State visits Pike, Floyd counties with BSADD staff



The Big Sandy Area Development District (BSADD) recently hosted Secretary of State Michael G. Adams, right, for a full day in Pike and Floyd counties. Adams toured the region with BSADD team members Joe Jacobs and Blake Moss, visiting the Floyd County School of Innovation, meeting with a local small business supported through BSADD's FIRE program, and sitting down with local officials to discuss economic development opportunities. Adams also joined BSADD as the special guest of its first-ever FIRE Reception in Pikeville—an event focused on celebrating and expanding small business support in eastern Kentucky.

KIPDA staff participate in career fair at Bedford Elementary School



KIPDA staff from the Social Services, Transportation and the Community and Economic Development divisions recently participated in the Trimble County Career Fair at Bedford Elementary. Staff met with fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders and discussed interests and career opportunities available at KIPDA and throughout the region.

Sexton wraps up term as KADD chair

Eric Sexton, executive director of the Barren River Area Development District, officially concluded his term as chairman of the Kentucky Association of District Directors (KADD) June 13, marking the end of a significant chapter in the organization's leadership.

Sexton was recognized by fellow directors for his strategic vision, tireless advocacy and commitment to strengthening partnerships with state and federal agencies.



ERIC SEXTON

During his tenure, he helped foster deeper collaboration among the executive directors of Kentucky's 15 Area Development Districts (ADDs), which provide regional planning and development services across the commonwealth.

The KADD serves as a unified voice for Kentucky's ADDs on key regional issues, including economic development, aging and disability services and workforce initiatives, among others. The association also works closely with state and federal partners to ensure regional priorities are effectively communicated and addressed.

The organization has announced its new executive committee for the 2025-27 term:

- **Chairman:** Jarrett Haley, Kentuckiana Regional Planning & Development Agency (KIPDA)
- **Vice Chairman:** Joshua Farrow, Gateway Area Development District
- **Secretary:** Joanna Shake, Green River Area Development District
- **Treasurer:** Jeremy Buchanan, Purchase Area Development District
- **Immediate Past Chairman:** Eric Sexton, Barren River Area Development District

Clark receives GADD Founders Award



Rowan County Judge/Executive Harry Clark, above, received the Gateway Area Development District's (GADD) Founders Award during its annual meeting on June 24. The Founders Award honors former or current GADD board members or elected officials who have made significant contributions to the organization. Recipients exemplify the spirit and ideals of the district's founders and have provided distinguished service to GADD and to the cities, counties and communities within Bath, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan and Rowan counties.

FEATURED JOBS

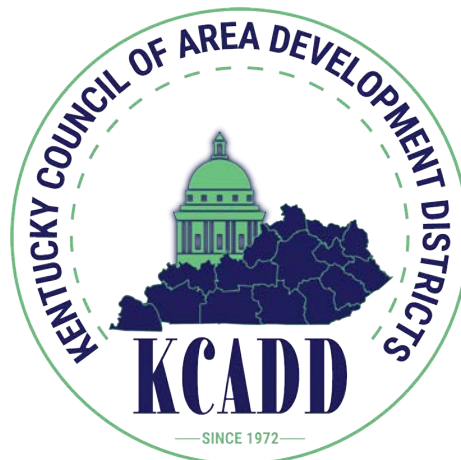
- **Case Manager (Green River Area Development District | Owensboro, Kentucky):** The Green River Area Development District is seeking a dedicated Case Manager to provide support and coordination for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities through Kentucky's Home and Community-Based (HCB) Waiver program. This role ensures clients receive the necessary resources to live as independently as possible within their communities. To learn more, visit gradd.com/individuals/job-seekers/employment-opportunities/
- **Principal/Senior Regional Planner (Gateway Area Development District | Morehead, Kentucky):** Coordinates and implements regional planning initiatives, projects, and public administration services for local government in the Gateway Region. The position will have the opportunity to gain experience in multiple subject areas, including land use, transportation, etc. To learn more, visit <https://gwadd.org/job/principal-senior-regional-planner/>

What is the Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts?

The Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts (KCADD) is the statewide association representing Kentucky's 15 Area Development Districts (ADDs). These ADDs operate as regional planning and development agencies, partnering with local governments to support economic development, infrastructure planning, aging services, and community advancement across the Commonwealth.

Formed in 1972, KCADD was established to provide a unified voice for the ADDs at both the state and federal levels. Its mission is to foster regional collaboration and strengthen the capacity of each ADD to address the distinct needs of its communities. Through advocacy and coordination, KCADD helps ensure Kentucky's rural and urban regions benefit from equitable access to resources and strategic planning.

"The Area Development Districts are often the boots on the ground when it



comes to federal and state programs reaching local communities," said KCADD Executive Director Casey Ellis. "KCADD helps amplify their efforts and advocate for continued investment in the regions that need it most."

ADDs provide a wide range of services, including grant writing and administration, transportation planning, workforce development

support, emergency management coordination, and aging programs funded through the federal Older Americans Act. KCADD facilitates statewide initiatives and serves as a liaison between the ADDs, the Governor's Office, the Kentucky General Assembly, and federal agencies.

Each ADD is governed by a local board made up of elected officials and citizen members, ensuring decisions reflect local priorities. KCADD works closely with these boards to offer policy guidance and promote best practices among the regions.

KCADD is headquartered in Frankfort at 501 Capital Avenue. For more information about the Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts, visit www.kcadd.org, or contact

Casey Ellis, Executive Director: cellis@kcadd.org, or Molly Haines, Public Information Officer, at mhaines@kcadd.org.