



Hardin  
County  
United

Unified Government  
*taking good leadership to the next level*



# Hardin County Today...

The last 6 years have been a unique and exciting time in Hardin County. 2011 finds the community realizing the benefits brought by the transformation and growth of Fort Knox. The nearly 10,000 direct and indirect associated new jobs have spurred new construction, business starts, expanded infrastructure and more. The community has tremendous potential going forward and has the chance to capitalize on a vibrant local economy as the rest of the country works to recover.

Existing local government has a history of working together on initiatives for the good of the larger community. It includes 7 government jurisdictions:

**Hardin County Government**  
**City of Sonora**  
**City of West Point**

**City of Elizabethtown**  
**City of Upton**

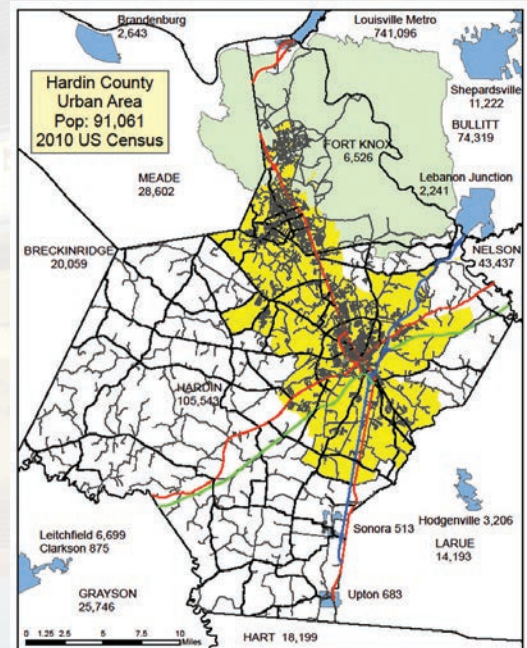
**City of Radcliff**  
**City of Vine Grove**

And is structured like this...

- Home to 94 government jurisdictions, county/municipal departments, utilities, official boards and commissions
- On a combined general fund basis, the community supports a budget of \$62.6 MM and a workforce of 774 full time workers
  - (An average of 7.3 workers per 1,000 citizens)
- Differences exist between the municipalities in terms of size, revenue, sources of revenue, the number of workers and services provided
- Duplication exists across numerous functions and departments

In spite of the fragmented manner in which the community has developed, a significant urban core has emerged in Hardin County.

85,000 people who live in this emerging core outside the gate at Fort Knox make this Kentucky's 3rd largest community.



## Elizabethtown MSA - a Metro with Momentum

**#1 MSA IN THE NATION FOR PERSONAL INCOME GROWTH IN 2010**  
**1ST MSA IN KENTUCKY TO MOVE FROM RECESSION TO RECOVERY**  
**MSA LED ALL KENTUCKY MSAS IN JOB GROWTH 2010-2011**

**RANKED 16TH NATIONALLY FOR JOB GROWTH 2011**  
**RETURN TO 2008 PEAK EMPLOYMENT EXPECTED 2011**

**RANKED 34TH ON FORBES LIST OF BEST SMALL PLACES FOR BUSINESS & CAREERS**



# A Desire to Unify the Community...

Hardin County United is working to develop unified government in Hardin County based on its findings during a year-long examination of the issue.

Focusing on the significant desire to unify the community exhibited in the Hardin County Vision Project, Hardin County United, led by its Governance Subcommittee, commissioned a study of unified government.

The study included an examination of local government, 5 case studies of unified governments, meetings with community leadership representing law enforcement, fire protection, Fort Knox, state elected officials and federal elected officials.

Upon review of the issue, both HCU's Governance Subcommittee and Steering Committee reached consensus and agreed that Hardin County would be well served with unified government, citing the following benefits:

1. The attainment of a new level of clout as Kentucky's third largest community that will assist the entire community in the creation of new jobs.

2. The ability for the community to speak with one voice and more efficiently target grants and appropriations which will benefit the entire community while improving the community's standing and stature in Frankfort and Washington, D.C.
3. Streamlined government which will result in the more efficient delivery of government services to all citizens.
4. The achievement of economies of scale which will result in the more efficient use of public resources (tax dollars)

*The real opportunity here is to take local government to the next level, to capitalize on the growth opportunities presented by base realignment and ongoing Army restructuring at Fort Knox and the Glendale mega site."*

—Judge Ken Howard, Chairman Governance Subcommittee

## Frequently Asked Questions about Unified Government in Hardin County

### 1. What is unified government?

Unified government is a government which has been created through the unification (or, merger) of two or more units of local government.

### 2. Is unified local government allowed by law in Kentucky?

Yes, at present, there are three types of unified local government which are allowed by law in Kentucky, including:

- Urban County Government
- Consolidated Local Government
- Unified Local Government

### 3. Which type of unified government applies to Hardin County?

Unified Local Government was created by statute in 2006 and has not yet been used by any jurisdiction in the state. Unified Local Government allows for the unification of county government with one or more cities in that county. After conducting a year-long examination of the issue of unified local government, HCU believes that the Unified Local Government concept offers the best approach for the community.

### 4. Why?

Unified Local Government offers Hardin County flexibility. Here's how it works. At a minimum, Hardin County Government would unify with at least the City of Elizabethtown and/or the City of Radcliff (you have to have County government and at least one of the two largest cities combine to make this work). Ideally, Hardin County Government will unify with all six city governments (Elizabethtown, Radcliff, Sonora, Upton, Vine Grove and West Point).

However, unification might not be for everyone. Therefore, by using the Unified Local Government approach, if the citizens in one of the cities prefer to remain free-standing, they can.

### 5. How is Unified Local Government implemented?

State law provides a pathway for forming a unified local government.

First, an ordinance is introduced and considered by each of the local government jurisdictions that are candidates for unification (county government and the city governments). The ordinance is simple and very straightforward and

creates a Unification Review Commission.

Second, upon passage, each jurisdiction appoints citizens to serve on the Unification Review Commission.

Third, the Unification Review Commission will hold several meetings (really public hearings) over a several month period during which the Commission members will actually draft a plan (also known as a Charter) for what the new unified government will look like.

Fourth, once the plan has been completed, it will be submitted to the voters for approval.

### 6. If my city council votes to approve the ordinance creating the Unification Review Commission, does that mean that they are voting for merger and it's a done deal?

Absolutely not! What it means is that your city council wants your city to have a place at the table as the unification plan is developed – to help shape it. In the end, the voters will vote to approve the plan. Voters (citizens) have the only say in the end as to whether the community unifies or not.





# Moving Toward Unified Government

## Step 1 - Hardin County United will...

- start by educating and informing the community, and each government entity, about the facts of unified government through community presentations
- solicit endorsements from key community groups and individuals for unified government, and,
- request the appointment of a Unification Review Commission by Hardin County Government and the six incorporated cities, pursuant to KRS Chapters 67.900-67.940

## Hardin County United will not...

- have the final say on whether or not local governments merge

## Step 2 - Fiscal Court and City Councils will...

- decide if they want to participate to give the community the chance to explore and vote on unified government
- appoint members to a Unification Review Commission

## Fiscal Court and City Councils will not...

- have the final say on whether or not local governments merge

## Step 3 - Unification Review Commission will...

- include 20-40 citizens appointed by participating government entities
- draft a proposed charter for unified government
- hold multiple hearings, open to the public, prior to finalizing the unification plan
- submit a plan to voters in November 2012 for approval

## Unification Review Commission will not...

- have the final say on whether or not local governments merge

## Step 4 - Voters will...

- review the proposed unification plan
- vote Yes or No on the question, "Are you in favor of unifying the city or cities of \_\_\_\_\_ and Hardin County into a single government according to the unification plan adopted by the Unification Review Commission?"
- **WILL have the final say on whether or not local governments merge**

*When exploring new ideas for government, it is my duty to make certain our residents have a seat at the table.*

—Blake Proffitt, Mayor of Vine Grove

## Frequently Asked Questions about Unified Government in Hardin County

### 7. Is there a downside to my city council voting NO on the ordinance?

Absolutely! By voting NO, your city will not have any input at all as to how the unification plan will be developed. More importantly, when the unification plan is presented to the voters, the plan will include all jurisdictions that approved the ordinance. Only those communities that participated will have the opportunity to be part of the new unified community.

### 8. What does this really mean?

Let's use Vine Grove as the hypothetical example here. Let's assume that Hardin County Fiscal Court and the city councils of all of the cities, with the exception of Vine Grove, approve the ordinance to create the Unification Review Commission.

When the Commission is appointed, Vine Grove will not be allowed to appoint any members. As the plan is developed, it will be developed to include the county and the other five cities. Whatever benefits that are identified to come as a result of unification will not include the City of Vine Grove. If the voters approve the plan, Vine Grove

will remain a free-standing city while the other jurisdictions will reap the benefits of merger.

### 9. If the community unifies, does that mean that the schools will also merge?

No! This issue pertains to local government only. Existing school districts will remain intact, as will existing utilities.

### 10. What are the benefits to unified local government?

HCU believes that there are four primary benefits to unified local government, including:

- The ability for the community to speak with one voice and more efficiently target grants and appropriations which will benefit the entire community while improving the community's standing and stature in Frankfort and Washington, D.C.,
- The attainment of a new level of clout that will assist the entire community with economic development, the creation of new jobs and which will create Kentucky's third largest community,

- Streamlined government which will result in the more efficient delivery of government services to all citizens which will result in a reduced rate of increase in the cost to provide public services over time, and,

- The achievement of economies of scale which will result in the more efficient use of public resources (tax dollars)

### 11. Will my taxes go up?

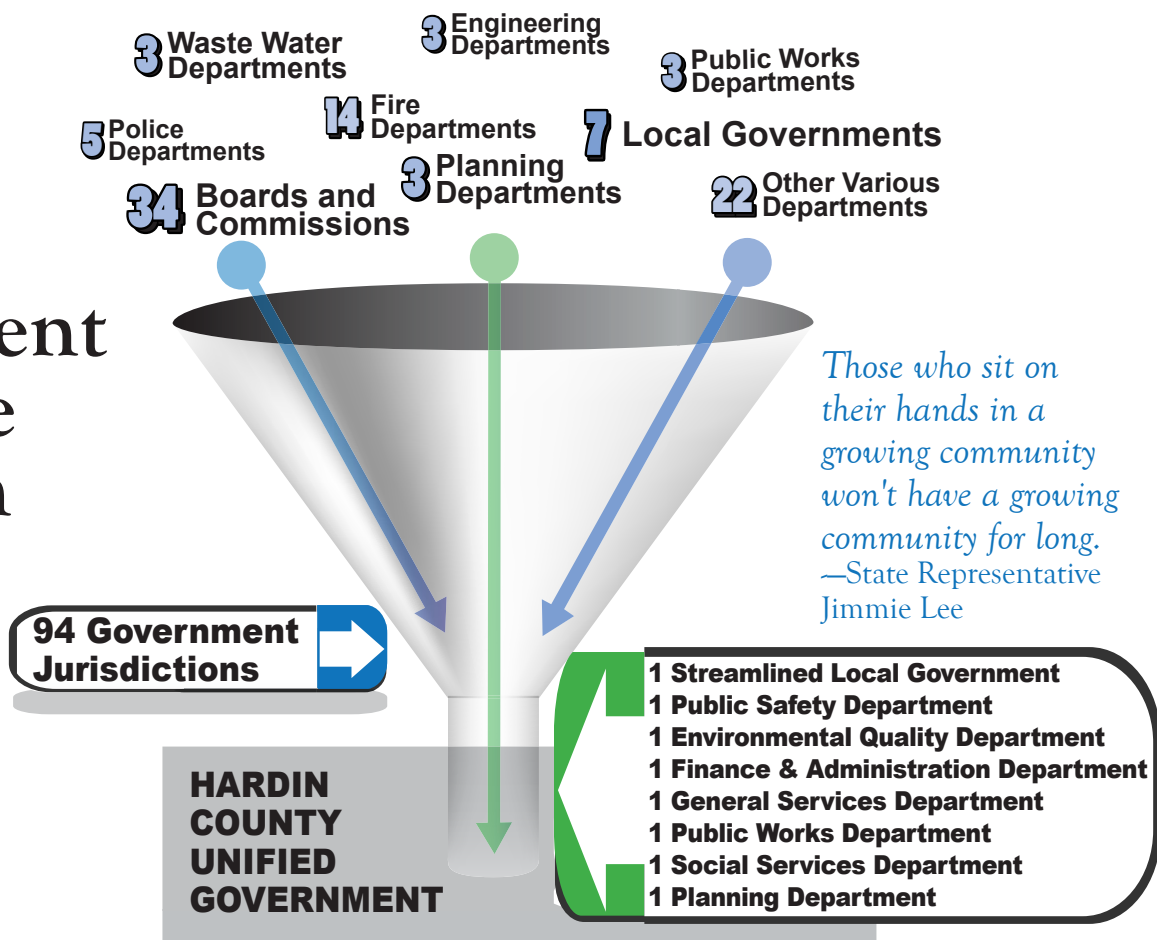
Most likely not. However, issues such as taxes will be considered and decided upon by the Unification Review Commission as it develops its plan (which will be subject to voter approval).

### 12. I live in Radcliff. If the community unifies, will I have to pay the restaurant tax to support the Elizabethtown Sports Park?

No! Upon implementation of unification, all existing taxing districts will remain in place. The restaurant tax will continue to be collected, only within the "old" boundaries of the City of Elizabethtown.



# What Could Unified Government Look Like in Hardin County?



## Frequently Asked Questions about Unified Government in Hardin County

### 13. My brother works for the Planning Department in Elizabethtown. Will he lose his job as the result of unification?

Again, the Unification Review Commission will develop a plan which will outline what kinds of departments will be required in order to "run" the new unified government. HCU's examination of five unified governments in Georgia and Kentucky highlighted the fact that no public workers lost their jobs as the result of unification.

Organizational "right-sizing" generally occurred within the first three years of unification through job reassignments, retirements and normal attrition. No layoffs occurred as the result of unification.

### 14. Will my level of government services go up or down?

Generally speaking, your level of services will stay the same; however, in some areas, they might be increased. This will be addressed by the Unification Review Commission.

### 15. Who will run the new unified local government?

Again, this will be up to the Unification Review Commission (with ultimate approval coming from the voters).

HCU envisions a unified local government that includes a strong executive branch and a strong legislative branch. The legislative branch would include representatives elected from a specific geographic district and representatives elected on an at-large basis (but required to live in specific areas).

The net result would be that each citizen would vote for three directly elected representatives: "metro" mayor, "metro" council member (geographic) and "metro" council member (at-large).

### 17. How can I make sure my community is involved in the process?

Be sure and contact the county judge/executive, your fiscal court magistrate, your mayor, and your city council members (remember to contact all of them)

and encourage them to pass the ordinance creating the Unification Review Commission to ensure that your community has a seat at the table and that you have an opportunity to vote on this issue!

### 18. When it comes time for the voters to approve the plan, what happens?

HCU envisions that the Unification Review Commission will complete its work and the plan that the Commission develops will be presented for approval by the voters in November 2012. The plan will require that a majority of voters approve it in each jurisdiction. For example, if Hardin County voters, along with voters in five of the six cities vote YES, then unified government will take place in each jurisdiction with the exception of the community which voted NO (it remains a free-standing community as before and does not get any of the advantages of unified government).



# About Hardin County United

Hardin County United was established in 2010. HCU's intent is to serve as a platform for the community as it examines each of the 24 strategic goals which were established during the Hardin County Vision Project and to develop recommendations as to how the Greater Hardin County community should proceed. The strategic goals — if and when implemented — will have a major impact on the community when it comes to such things

as education, community unification, quality of life/quality of place issues, etc.

HCU includes a Steering Committee which has oversight for the entire organization. HCU also includes three subcommittees: Community Development, Education, and Governance.

## Steering Committee

Hon. William Ash* Mayor, City of West Point	Mr. Ron Harrell Chief Institutional Advancement Officer, Elizabethtown Community & Technical College	Dr. Daksha Mehta, M.D.	Dr. Ron Stephens, Ph.D. Associate Dean, Western Kentucky University Elizabethtown Regional Campus
Hon. Harry Berry* Hardin County Judge/Executive	Mr. Emmet Holley Deputy Garrison Commander, Fort Knox	Ms. Roszelle Moore Former West Point Chamber of Commerce Executive Director	Ms. Terri Stewart* Elizabethtown Community & Technical College
The Rev. Michael Bell Pastor, Glendale Christian Church	Hon. Stan Holmes* Radcliff City Councilmember	Mr. Kelsey O'Daniel* Associate Vice President, Citizens Union Bank	Ms. Davette Swiney Vice President, North Central Education Foundation
Ms. Donna Broadway Events Coordinator, City of Vine Grove	Hon. Ken Howard* Hardin County Circuit Court Judge	Mr. Travis Pelley Consumer Products Manager, Sentry Insurance	Mr. Bobby Thompson MG (Ret) John Tindall U.S. Army
Mr. Glen Dalton* former Hardin County Judge/Executive	Ms. Rene Hutcheson Executive Director Hardin County Public Library	Hon. Blake Proffitt* Mayor, City of Vine Grove	Hon. Tim Walker* Mayor, City of Elizabethtown
Dr. Tom Davenport, Ph.D. Dean for Workforce Development, Elizabethtown Community & Technical College	Mr. James Jeffries Executive Director, Hardin County Water District # 2	Mr. Marcus Ray, President Hardin County Branch, NAACP	Dr. Thelma White, Ph.D. President, Elizabethtown Community & Technical College
Dr. Jack Dilbeck, Ph.D. Institutional Effectiveness, Elizabethtown Community & Technical College	Mr. Greg Jenkins Chairman, Elizabethtown/ Hardin County Industrial Foundation	Mr. Brad Richardson President/CEO, Hardin County Chamber of Commerce	Mr. David Willmoth* former Mayor, City of Elizabethtown
Hon. J.J. Duvall* Mayor, City of Radcliff	Ms. Nannette Johnston Superintendent, Hardin County Schools	Mr. Al Rider President/CEO, North Central Education Foundation	Mr. Brian Woosley* CPA, Stiles, Carter & Associates
Ms. Sheila Enyart* former Mayor, City of Radcliff	Hon. Garry King* Magistrate, Hardin County Fiscal Court	Mr. Paul Rogers VP, Cardinal Health	Mr. John Wright Community Relations Specialist, Hardin County Schools
Mr. Gary French Superintendent, Elizabethtown Independent Schools	Ms. Kathy King Executive Director, Community Coordinated Child Care	Ms. Stacey Scroggins Troy University	Ms. Marlane Youngblood* Executive Assistant & Strategic Planner for BRAC, Office of the Governor
Mr. Rick Games President, Elizabethtown/ Hardin County Industrial Foundation	Mr. Ben LaRue Owner, LaRue Financial	Ms. D. Dee Shaw* City Attorney, City of Elizabethtown	Luke B. Schmidt, President L.B. Schmidt & Associates, LLC Consultant to Hardin County United
Ms. Kelly Graham Instructional Supervisor, Elizabethtown Independent Schools	Mr. Wendell Lawrence* Executive Director, Lincoln Trail Area Development District	Mr. Doug Shepherd* County Extension Agent, Hardin County Cooperative Extension Service	
Ms. Diane Hafer Hardin County Performing Arts Center	Ms. Diane Logsdon VP/COO, Hardin Memorial Hospital	Mr. Ben Sheroan Editor, The News-Enterprise	
	Mr. Jim Long Central Kentucky Region President, Citizens Union Bank	Ms. Pamela Stephens Superintendent, West Point Independent Schools	

\* denotes membership on  
Governance Subcommittee



[www.hardincountyunited.com](http://www.hardincountyunited.com)

