

Correspondence from:

The “Company of Seven” local clergy group & the Richland Community Family Coalition

November 22, 2011

Dear Richland County Agricultural Society Fair Board,

THE ISSUE Thank you for your tireless work year-round in managing the largest civic attraction in the county: the fairgrounds. We commend you for the countless hours you spend to ensure that the county fair runs smoothly each year. Last spring, on April 26, 2011, the Fair Board of Directors voted to include a beer garden beside the grandstand for the 2011 County Fair. It is our understanding, according to local media reports, that the Board of Directors was looking for additional sources of revenue to help make payments on a loan taken out five years ago for the construction of several barns.

As local clergy in the Body of Christ, we see first-hand the tragic problems associated with alcohol and substance abuse in our community. Compelled by the love of Christ, our seven area congregations are actively addressing this issue in our community by serving the families and individuals struggling with this bondage.

Having said this, the “Company of Seven” clergy group, partnered with the Richland Community Family Coalition, both agree that the introduction of a fair beer garden is counter-productive, working against our collective efforts in minimizing the local epidemic of alcohol and substance abuse, and should therefore be permanently cancelled on the following grounds:

POINT ONE: We believe that the fair beer garden breaks a long standing tradition of being a family-oriented event.

It is believed that the Richland County Fair has been in existence since 1850. In this day there is no question that raising funds has been a difficult challenge for the Fair Board of Directors. It can be said however, that our community throughout history has not been without economic hardship (See Chart 1). Since 1850, economists point out that nationally, there has been at least seven depressions and eleven recessions; due in part to the cycles the economy naturally goes thru (See Chart 2). While times are perplexing, they are certainly not unique in the light of history. As King Solomon put it, “There is nothing new under the sun, is there anything of which it may be said, ‘See this is new?’ It has already been in ancient times before us,” (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10). The interesting point to be made is that even during these economic downturns, in its 160 year history, the Richland County Fair has never sold alcohol until most recently in 2011. Recognizing this shift from a traditional family-friendly atmosphere, several entities passed resolutions objecting to the fair beer garden. This list consists of Mansfield City Council, Madison Twp. Trustee Board, Springfield Twp. Trustee Board, Washington Twp. Trustee Board, Mansfield Christian School Board and Temple Christian School Board.



POINT TWO: We believe that the fair beer garden jeopardizes the security and well-being of our children.

The fair has traditionally been an event that young people can display their talents thru organizations like the 4- H, the Girl Scouts, and Future Farmers of America (FFA). This year the Junior Fair had forty-four 4-H clubs, and five FFA chapters participating in 2011. In fact, over 800 livestock exhibits were shown by young people.¹ Most alarming is the announcement by the Fair Board Manager that youth will now be allowed to sleep overnight in the barns the week of the fair.² This arrangement with the presence of the fair beer garden and the presence of young people at the fair during late hours raises the specter that another incident could happen like the one that occurred several years ago at the local Rock n' Ribs Fest. In that case, the sexual assault of a fifteen year old near the beer garden took place when the minor was given alcohol by one of the security guards and then raped.³ This does not bode well especially with a local law enforcement that is depleted and left without a Sheriff's detective bureau.⁴

On the contrary, some may say that there appears to be no problems when alcohol is served in other public places with children present. To address this point, we have included an article from the Wall Street Journal discussing the problems posed with alcohol and children at the same location. This article analyzes this lethal combination for the national restaurant chain Chuck E. Cheese.

Needless to say, alcohol is the #1 drug of choice for children and adolescents⁵ and the leading contributor to the leading causes of death among young people in the United States.⁶ Tongue and cheek, the Bible warns about alcohol abuse saying: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow or redness of eyes? Who has contentions or wounds without cause? Those who linger long at the wine...it will bite like a serpent, your eyes will see strange things... you shall say 'when shall I awake that I may seek another drink?'" (Proverbs 23:29-35)

POINT THREE: We believe that the report given to the media on the success of the fair beer garden was embellished.

According to the Associated Press, the fair beer garden garnered a net profit of \$6,000 and that no incidents occurred during the fair (See Article 1). In addition, the Fair Board Manager reported in the local newspaper a 20% increase in attendance for the 2011 Fair over last year's attendance of 32,000.⁷

According to records provided by the Fair Board President, despite the added publicity, the beer concessions did not make a net profit of \$6,000 as reported, but rather a net profit of \$2,219.⁸ In response to an information request by the Richland Community Family Coalition, the Fair Board President reported that the Fair Board keeps no record of fair attendance numbers. She stated that the number of tickets sold, are not recorded.⁹

Moreover, according to the Sheriff's Department, there was one arrest at the fairgrounds during the fair on 8.13.11 involving underage consumption of alcohol and aggravated menacing (Case # 11-3464). In this report, the deputy stated that he was "assisting other deputies in breaking up numerous fights" around the fairgrounds when the incident occurred.

According to the Sheriff's Department, there were also crime incident reports filed at the fairgrounds during the County Fair for an assault (Case #11-3444), domestic violence (Case #11-3442), and three thefts (Case # 11-3383), (Case # 11-3382) (Case # 11-3345). For what it's worth, while there was a total of six crime incident reports in 2011 with the addition of a fair beer garden, no crime incident reports were filed in 2010 when there was no fair beer garden. This should be no surprise since Christ pointed out that "a good tree cannot bear bad fruit and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit" (Matthew 7:18).

While no link to the fair beer garden has been proven, there was a total of five operating vehicle intoxicated (OVI) arrests made within five miles of the fairgrounds the week of the 2011 County Fair according to the Ohio Highway Patrol (See Map 2).

POINT FOUR: We believe that there are costs associated with the fair beer garden that have not been accounted for.



All things considered, the cost of one soul is priceless, “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36) However, because the Fair Board of Directors has listed its only reason for having the fair beer garden is to make a sizeable profit, we are charged with the task of analyzing profit margins. Nonetheless, the expenses incurred for the fair beer garden only included the cost of security, the cost of the tent, and the cost of the beer.¹⁰ It is our understanding that the official fair board numbers did not include the cost of the liquor liability insurance premium nor the liquor licenses (Table 1). With these unaccounted expenses added, the beer garden profit drops from \$2,219 to \$1,444.

Additionally, our findings indicate that the Sheriff’s Department charged the Fair Board of Directors an additional \$2,500 more for security than the average cost of security for the last three years’ fairs (See Chart 3). While the official fair board numbers only list an \$875 cost for security for the fair beer garden, the additional \$1,625 of the \$2,500 has not been included in the fair board expenses for the fair beer garden. The case could be made that there is evidence that the fair beer garden actually lost money (-\$181).

Consequently, seven area businesses have terminated their sponsorship of the fair next year because of the inclusion of the fair beer garden (See Table 2). While hindsight can be twenty-twenty, local businessmen were also offering money to the Fair Board of Directors as incentive for not having a fair beer garden (See Table 3).

It is also our understanding that five Agricultural Society members served five hour shifts each night at the beer garden equating to 175 volunteer hours; this does not include the set up and the tear down of the garden.¹¹

POINT FIVE: We believe that the Fair Board of Directors has a moral obligation to keep its word regarding the conditions for the cancellation of the fair beer garden.

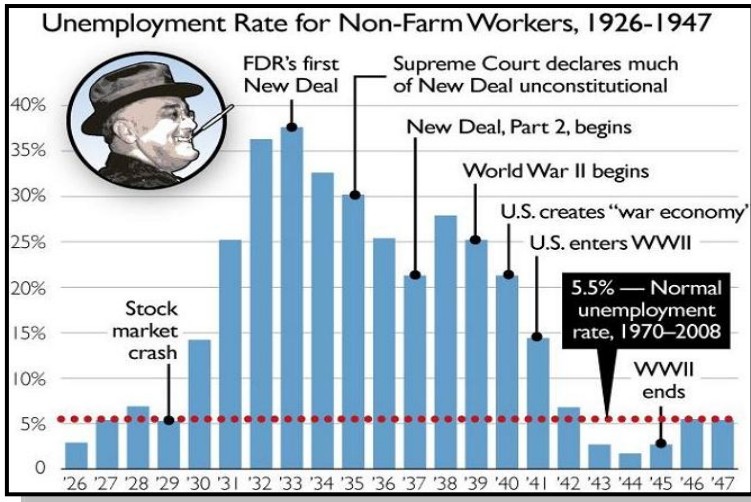
Keeping your word is important. On the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated :“Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one,” (Matthew 5:37). We, as spiritual leaders in the community, are held accountable for our words and actions and rightfully so. On October 28, 2007, a covenant was made by the local Body of Christ at the Central Park Gazebo in downtown Mansfield to our Heavenly Father, and to the community, promising that we would relinquish our apathy and address head on, the problem of alcohol and substance abuse in our county. We have to keep our word.

We are now asking you to keep your word. According to an interview with WMFD TV-68, the Fair Board Manager listed three conditions, if anyone of them occurred, would invariably cancel the beer garden; these included an unsuitable fair beer garden profit, underage consumption, and drunk driving (See Article 2). Furthermore, the Fair Board Manager articulated that a suitable profit was “about \$10,000” (See Article 3).

In closing, Dan Bullen, head of District No. 3 of the Ohio Fair Managers Association, reported that alcohol is sold at more than twenty county fairs in Ohio.¹² This is out of ninety-five fairs throughout the state. Interestingly, this past summer the Clark County fair board rejected a beer garden proposal in a survey.¹³ In this same way, we are trusting that your hour of decision would be a moment of truth; return the “family” back to the county fair and cancel the fair beer garden. Thank you for your careful consideration in this matter.

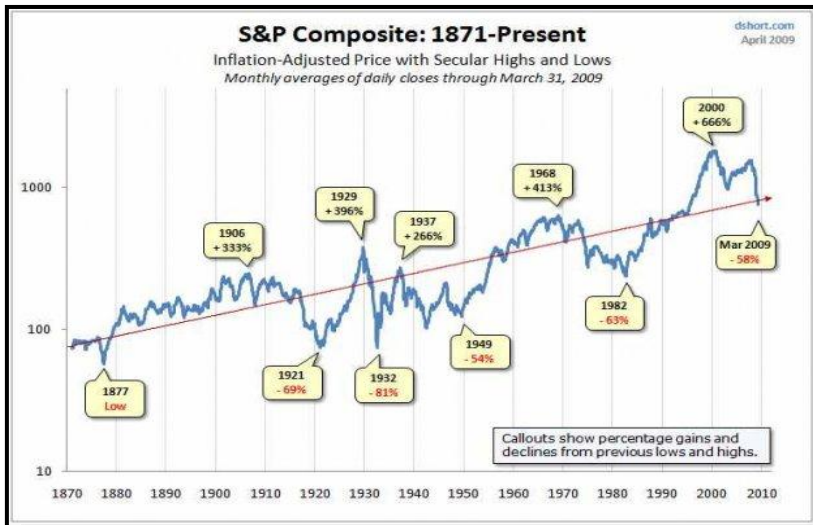
REFERENCES

- 1 Email correspondence to Ben Mutti from Judy Villiard-Overrocker 11.15.11.
- 2 “Mild weather helps fair prosper, by Lou Whitmire, Mansfield News Journal 8.15.11.
- 3 “Man sentenced for sexual battery of 15 year old girl” by Russ Kent, Mansfield News Journal, 3.23.04.
- 4 “ Richland Co. Sheriff’s Office Braces For Big Cuts,” by reporter Glenn McEntyre, 3.24.10. www.10tv.com/content/stories/2010/03/21/story_richlandco_cuts.html on internet 11.21.11.
- 5 Substance Abuse and Mental health Services Administration, 2004, results from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health; National Findings. Rockville, MD: Office of Applied Studies
- 6 Hingson R. Kenkel D. 2004, Social, health and economic consequences of underage drinking. In: Reducing Underage Drinking: A collective Responsibility, background papers (CD-ROM). Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 351-382
- 7 “Mild weather helps fair prosper, by Lou Whitmire, Mansfield News Journal, 8.15.11; photo included by Jason Molyet.
- 8 Ben Mutti phone conversation with Fair Board President Donna Seibart 11.16.11
- 9 Ben Mutti interview with Fair Board President Donna Seibart, 10.06.11, at Administrative Building.
- 10 Ben Mutti phone conversation with Fair Board President Donna Seibart 11.16.11.
- 11 Ben Mutti phone conversation with anonymous Richland County Fair Agricultural Society Board member 11.09.11.
- 12 “Two commissioners oppose alcohol sales at county fair,” by Tiffany Y. Latta, Dayton Daily News, 7.21.11.
- 13 “Two commissioners oppose alcohol sales at county fair,” by Tiffany Y. Latta, Dayton Daily News, 7.21.11.



(Chart 1.) Severe economic conditions during The Great Depression

<http://www.ritholtz.com/blog/2009/09/depression-versus-recession/>



(Chart 2.) History of Economic Cycles in United States

www.dshort.com April 2009

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Beer profitable at OH county fair, despite critics

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MANSFIELD, Ohio (AP) — Officials say an Ohio county fair's first-ever beer sales were profitable and problem-free, despite criticism.

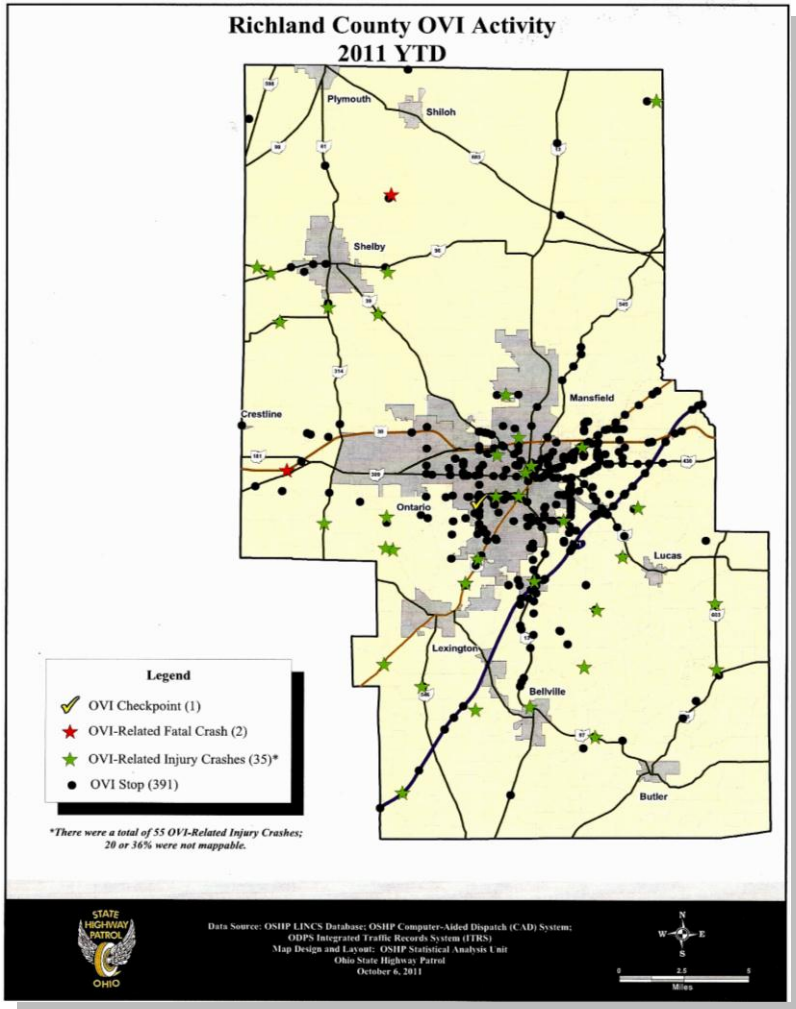
Religious leaders and others had objected to the beer garden that was part of this year's Richland County Fair. Its weeklong run ended Saturday in north-central Ohio.

Fair manager Dean Wells tells the News Journal of Mansfield that the beer concession made a net profit of about \$6,000. He says there were no incidents related to the beer sales.

A group called the Richland Community Family Coalition led opposition to the beer sales, thought to be a first in the fair's 160-year history. Coalition spokesman Ben Mutti (MYOO'-tee) says several businesses won't sponsor next year's fair over the issue.

Wells says the fair benefited from free publicity over the controversy.

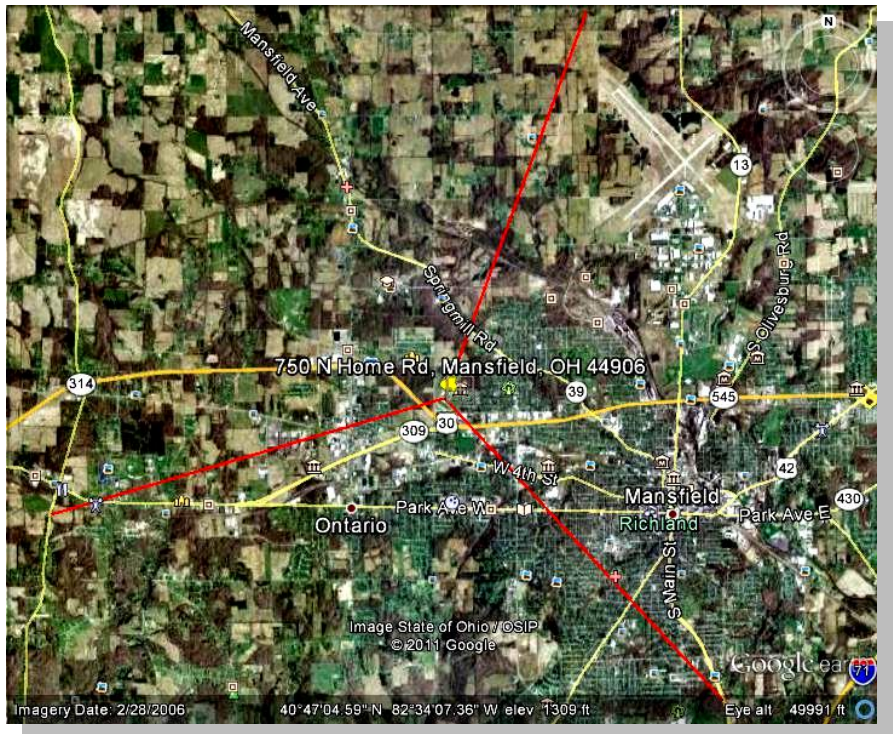
(Article 1.)



(Map 1.) Operating Vehicle while Intoxicated (OVI) arrests in Richland County for the year 2011

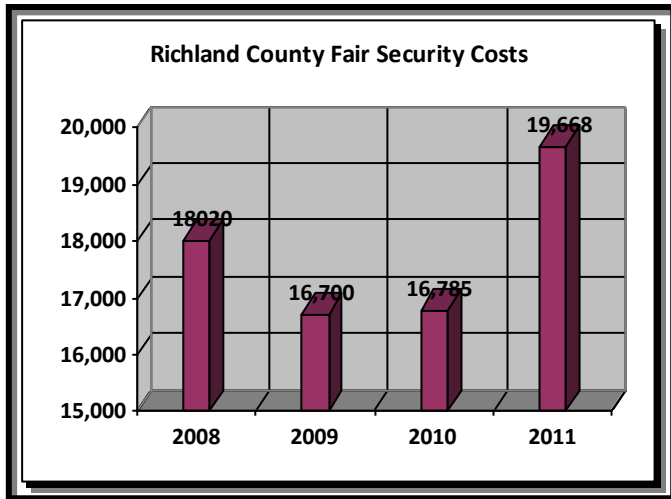
(Map 2.) According to Ohio Highway Patrol, **Five (5) OVI arrests occurred during week of 2011 Fair within five mile radius of fairgrounds**

Ohio Highway Patrol, Jeff Maute
jmaute@dps.state.oh.us, 877.772.8765
 10.24.11 email correspondence to Ben Mutti



(Chart 3.) Cost of 2011 Richland County Fair Security

Based on invoices sent by the Richland County Sheriff's Department



Average Fair Security Costs between 2008-2010 **\$17,168**
(With no beer garden)

Fair Security Cost 2011 **\$19,668**
(With beer garden)

Difference of \$2,500

14.6% INCREASE in 2011

(This cost only partially included in official Fair Board numbers)

(Table 1.) Cost of Liquor Liability Insurance

According to a representative of the ACE American Insurance Company from agent William Wilkerson's office, the liquor liability premium for the fair beer garden event held by the Richland County Agricultural Society cost a **total of \$695** (Sheila.caruso@hnins.com, 913.676.9240, per phone conversation 11.15.11)

(This cost was not included in official Fair Board numbers)

Cost of Liquor Permits

The Richland County Agricultural Fair Board applied for two temporary (F Class) liquor permits (#73570600003) for the 2011 County Fair costing a **total of \$80**

(This cost was not included in official Fair Board numbers)

(Table 2.) Businesses that have **withdrawn support of Richland County Fair as a result of the 2011 Fair beer garden**

Based on findings of Richland Community Family Coalition

At least **seven (7) confirmed local businesses will no longer sponsor fair:**

Country Fabrics Housewares & Gifts, Owner Harvey Burkholder

Country Metals, Owner Paul Rieff

Newswanger Machine Ltd, Owner Leon Newswanger

Newswanger Meats, Owner Gaelin Newswanger

Planktown Country Market LLC, Owner Eugene Shirk

Weavers Magneto Repair, Owner Kenneth Weaver

Zimmerman's Metal & Lumber Inc., Owner Harvey Zimmerman

(Table 3.) Businessmen that **would have supported Richland County Fair in 2011 if beer garden was cancelled**

Based on calls received by the Richland Community Family Coalition the week of the fair

The following are **(3) local businessmen that were willing to donate monies to the Richland County Agricultural Fair Board contingent on the board's decision to cancel the beer garden:**

Mr. John Mathes \$500

Mr. Scott Sharrock \$1,000

Anonymous \$150


Total of **\$1,650 of donations were available to the Richland County Fair Board**

(Article 2.) Conditions for the cancellation of the beer garden

WMFD TV News
MANFIELD

Beer Garden Set To Go At Fair

Originally posted on: 8/4/2011 1:09:22 PM



The Richland County Fair Board does have alcohol liability insurance coverage, and a beer garden will be part of next week's fair. The tent for it was set-up Wednesday.

Fair Manager Dean Wells says the beer garden was approved to make enough money to cover a payment of a half-million-dollar loan taken out five years ago for a new chicken barn and an addition to the red barn.

Wells says the beer will be 16 ounce plastic bottles of Bud Light for four dollars each. And, each person will be limited to two a day.

Wells says if the beer garden does not make a suitable profit, or if any public drunkenness or drunk driving results from it, this will be the first and last time it's part of the fair. He says other fairs that have beer gardens report no problems.

- 1) Suitable profit not made
- 2) Public drunkenness
- 3) Drunk driving

(Article 3.) Definition of a “suitable profit” by the Fair Manager



Fair Manager Dean Wells in WMFD-TV Interview 8.04.11:

“It (beer garden) will be in a cordoned off area fenced in area with a tent. It’s not going to be air conditioned so it’s not going to be a place where somebody is going to sit all day. I’m guessing, if we could make one payment to pay towards our building program, I would be very satisfied with that. That payment would be just a little under \$10,000....”

“Company of Seven” Pastors’ Bio

Reverend Steve Schag, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Helped start a chapter of Reformer’s Unanimous drug treatment ministry in 2008 serving more than 500 people. The Bible-based program receives referrals from the Mansfield and Shelby Municipal Courts, the Mansfield and Richland Correctional Institutions, along with offenders from the County Juvenile Court. According to Schag, who also serves as a city councilman, “Statistics show that alcohol is the gateway to every physical addiction and the primary cause for relapse.”



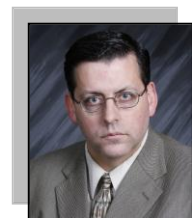
Reverend John Harris, Pastor of Armor Bearers Ministries, has begun a local chapter of Celebrate Recovery drug treatment program in the Lexington area. With a ministry focused primarily for bikers, the church plans on starting a detox center and utilizing Reverend Harris’s training as a certified alcohol & abuse counselor with the American Association of Christian Counselors.

Reverend Mark Dettmer, Pastor of First Church of the Nazarene; for the last five years the church has hosted Alcoholic Anonymous group meetings daily; where between twenty and forty persons attend. “Our goal is to be involved in the community and to provide healing and hope for those in need,” says Rev. Dettmer.



Reverend El Akuchie, Pastor of Godsfield House of Prayer helped coordinate march against drugs in 2007 with participants representing thirty-eight local churches; the following year police officials reported the lowest violent crime rate in sixteen years. Most recently in summer of 2011, Rev. El helped draft a letter from seventy-two area pastors to the local board of health objecting to the donation of syringes to a Portsmouth needle exchange program. Most notably, he took part in the “Delegation of Hope” which wrote a report of a dramatic turnaround story of a city overcoming substance abuse, helping inspire the documentary: “An Appalachian Dawn.”

Reverend James Spencer, Pastor of People’s Baptist Church helped start a local chapter of Reformers Unanimous which has 700 chapters nationwide and an 82% success rate for persons upon five years after graduating from the course. Weekly lessons encourage students to read and memorize the Bible, and to interact with others, which is changing lives and bringing participants into an addiction-free lifestyle. According to Reverend Spencer, “We (the church) need to do more to impact our culture for Christ, so we are stepping up to the plate.”



Reverend Rick Lewis, Pastor of Shelby Church of God has started a local chapter of Celebrate Recovery, a support group with twelve steps applying Biblical principles to help end addictive compulsive behavior. The local ministry has been chosen as a sentencing option with the Shelby Municipal court. Having started in 2009, nearly forty people now attend the weekly meetings. “We have seen evidence of change in peoples’ lives,” Rev. Lewis says. “Drug addiction is the result of empty lives with nowhere to turn. With our ministry, people know they can go to a place where there is love and hope.”

Reverend Doug Tackett, Pastor of Taylortown Community Church has served nearly 100 people in the Shelby area facing addictions to alcohol, cocaine, heroin, and prescription painkillers. “Counseling alone does not solve the problem; we reach out to the families as well,” says Rev. Tackett. Starting in 2007, the church’s drug treatment ministry has offered support groups and provides referrals to Jesus-based drug treatment.

