

ACTION 1A

Expanding the Retiree & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in Trigg County

There are over 200 volunteers signed up under the Trigg County Retiree & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) currently assisting the following agencies and non-profits: American Cancer Society, American Legion, American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, Barkley Plantation, Beta Nu, Helping Hands, Bargain Barn, Genesis Express, Janice Mason Art Museum, John L. Street Library, Ham Festival, Historical Society, Lion's Club, Trigg County Schools, Shady Lawn and Trigg Manor Nursing Homes, Pennyroyal Center, Rotary Power for Life, Pennyryle Hospice, Trigg County Hospital Auxiliary, Toys for Tots, Trigg County Extension Service, VFW.

According to their website, RSVP provides *“volunteers for numerous non-profit organizations in Christian and Trigg Counties. RSVP volunteers choose how and where they want to serve. Just a few of our volunteer opportunities available with non-profits include mentoring and tutoring programs in the schools, assist with respite or hospice services, help people recover from natural disasters, tax preparation, help in food pantries or deliver meals. Whatever the volunteer's skills and interests are, we're sure we have a volunteer opportunity available.”*

Kerry Rogers has been the director of the (RSVP) in both Trigg and Christian County since February 2015 and is very open to new and innovative ideas to expand the program for greater outreach.

“I CHOSE TRIGG” CAMPAIGN

Cadiz-Trigg County should start an “I chose Trigg” campaign where people actually share why they chose to live in Trigg County. It could become one of the best advertising campaigns for both selling and informing people about all the community has to offer. **Testimonials are great marketing tools for tourism, chamber, EDC and the community itself.**

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

One idea is to **start an Ambassador Program similar to the one currently in place in Paducah KY where volunteers serve as greeters welcoming visitors to the area and assisting at events and attractions.** Long-time residents often make great ambassadors. But don't overlook those who may have lived elsewhere and may have only recently retired to Trigg County. Sometimes it is they who have a real passion for the community because, out of everywhere they could have chosen to live, they chose Trigg.

EXISTING AMBASSADOR PROGRAM IN PADUCAH

**The information below is paraphrased from the paducahky.gov website.*

The Paducah Ambassadors are volunteers who give their time, energy, and knowledge in welcoming visitors and greeting guests at special events such as groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings. Also known as the "Red Coats" due to their red jackets, the Paducah Ambassadors is a hospitality organization whose members represent Paducah and McCracken County at official events, celebrations, conventions, and special meetings. Some of the responsibilities of the Red Coats include welcoming guests downtown, greeting visitors during AQS Quilt Week, and welcoming the public prior to City Commission meetings. Established in 1988, the volunteer organization maintains approximately 130 volunteers who log in more than 5,000 hours a year.



The Paducah Ambassadors maintain an office on the first floor of City Hall. The office is not staffed daily. However, phone messages are checked on a regular basis. Contact the Paducah Ambassadors at 270-444-8632 to find out more about this volunteer program.

WELCOME WAGON

Trigg County once had, and may still have, a very active Welcome Wagon to welcome new residents to the community. And in conversations with a few of the newer residents, the churches in the area seem to really reach out to make them feel welcome. **It would be great if, in the process of welcoming these newcomers, an interest and experience form be filled out so, when initiatives come up that may require certain expertise, the information will be readily available to know who might have these skills and/or interests.** Real estate agents in the area may be able to assist in gathering this information which could then be shared with RSVP.

And someone, possibly through RSVP, needs to be collecting this type of information on those who already live in the community. For example, there is a group of three or four gentlemen in Trigg County who have a strong interest in trains and who, in fact, have model train displays in a few of their homes. Trigg County is currently in need of individuals with just this expertise and interest for a proposed project for the Historical Society. Individuals who have culinary skills is another initiative. Having such a database would be extremely helpful at this time.

DRIVING TOURS

Another idea is to have volunteers serve as step-on guides for Trigg County's "Magical History Tour" of the county which could include stops:

- At the home of Boots Randolph where they can also tour the old schoolhouse and check out the Cadiz Train Engine.
- In Downtown Cadiz to shop and take the historic walking tour.
- A driving tour of the historic communities of Cerulean and Canton, possibly stopping for a tour of the old Canton hotel where they can partake in some refreshments or purchase homegrown produce or breads at the Farmer's market in Cerulean.
- A visit to the resort at Lake Barkley State Park. Designed by Edward Durell Stone, it is an architectural wonder being one of the tallest one-story open post-and-beam wood structures with 3 ½ acres of glass allowing panoramic views of the lake *and*
- A tour of Land between the Lakes with possible stops at the Homeplace 1850's Farm, Elk & Bison Prairie and other sites scheduled around a show at the Planetarium.

"RETIRE IN TRIGG AND LET THE FUN BEGIN!"

There is tremendous economic benefit to attracting retirees to one's community including, but not limited to, the fact that they make great volunteers and are a tremendous resource of both talent and expertise. And the economic impact of the average retired couple moving into one's community is the same as creating 3.7 new factory jobs. Communities have recognized this and made concerted efforts to attract retirees to their areas. Trigg County already has many retirees coming into their community but has never fully capitalized on those who do come nor are they actively seeking more to come. This is a missed opportunity.

There should be a joint initiative between RSVP, Tourism, Chamber, EDC, and the local Real Estate Association to start a marketing campaign that would be focused specifically on enticing retirees to relocate in Cadiz-Trigg County. And a program created that both welcomes these new residents and encourages them to become engaged in the community.

See GOAL #2 and ACTION 2A for more on how other communities have implemented this program and the financial benefits it brings.