

What do you think?

an opinion for The People by pete edwards

New clobber for the cons

People are losing their homes, cars are running out of gas on the way to work, increasingly working folks are needing assistance to live through the week. They are all taxpayers yet they are hurting. Does Bradley County Sheriff Tim Gobble care? He is proving himself incapable of understanding the concept of poverty. The idea is foreign to him that the world does not start and end at the county jail and prisoners are not supposed to be mollycoddled.

Harsh words I know, but someone needs to wake this man up.

His latest bright idea to anger his supporters is to spend \$15,368 of the taxpayer's money on new prisoner uniforms (with logos) as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods funding. Total cost, \$31,356.

Enough said.

That's what I think. What do you think?

Sign; Ostriches ahead

Small business people for years have been complaining that Cleveland's sign ordinance is anti-business. Everyone is restricted except the good-ol-boys in the billboard business. Just last month, orders were given to dispose of all roadside signs on city property, including political signs, but excluding the good-ol-boys in the real estate business. The message is, you live and pay taxes in Cleveland but you are not entitled to equal treatment.

Cleveland Mayor, Tom Rowland, after presiding over the sign ban now wants more signs erected to fleece the eagerly anticipated influx of Volkswagen workers. The idea seems good to him, signs attract people's attention, so a museum full of paying customers learning about the achievements of Cleveland's good-ol-boys is what he

would call a win-win situation. The fact that the ordinary small business riffraff may like to attract customers on an equal basis eludes him.

And what about the political signs? The good-ol-boys running for office know plenty of other good-ol-boy property owners on the High Street willing to display their re-election picture but again, the little guy wanting to help his fellow little guys will get his face smashed at the behest of people like Rowland.

That's what I think. What do you think?

School punishment

On page 20 of this issue you can read a great guest editorial by Donace Martin, on the victimization of a Bradley County history teacher who trod on a few high ranking toes. Anyone who knows me will vouch for my unwavering support

of the freedom of speech. While I personally believe a responsibility for one's actions is part of that freedom, in some cases speaking out can provoke dire punishment no one should be forced to endure.

Speaking out is self limiting in the sense that few will agree if there is no truth in what you speak. On the

other hand, if the truth needs telling, people will listen.

I believe some members of the Bradley County Board of Education want to stifle free speech because they fear the truth and that too many people will find out what they are up to. The Russians tried to keep out the truth with walls and SS police. The school board is

doing it with intimidation and regulation. Stopping people from addressing their concerns by petitioning their elected representatives is in violation of the US Constitution and is better suited to a communist regime. We Americans do not appreciate dictators with communist tendencies infusing their self-serving doctrines on the populus.

That's what I think. What do you think?

Do You Support Our Troops?

Saying you do is easy but words don't always get heard.

Cleveland teenager, Kaylee Radzynski has found a way that your support can be heard loud and clear. She created a program called Tunes 4 The Troops.

Kaylee, a Naval Sea Cadet discovered that our Military Armed Forces have access to computers but crave American entertainment. After donating several CDs of her own she no longer listened to, she realized that others in the community may also wish to donate discs.

If you have any new or used CDs, DVDs or Books on CD you no longer need, help Kaylee Radzynski say a big "Thank You" to our troops by donating them to Tunes 4 The Troops

For information call 472-4078

Drop-Off Locations

- Armed Forces Recruiting Offices, on Paul Huff Pkwy.
- Award Realty
- Bradley Bookkeeping 129 Keith Street
- Bradley County Courthouse Room 206
- Circuit Court Clerk's Office
- Cleveland City Mayor, Tom Rowland's Office
- Cleveland High School
- Country Squire Homes, 167 S Lee Hwy.
- Dick's Graphics, 801 20th St.
- DQ Grill & Chill, 275 Paul Huff Pkwy
- National Guard Armory 4185 Dalton Pike
- Southern Heritage Bank (all locations)

Spotlight on the Industrial Development Board.

By Tonya Sprague

Recently the Cleveland / Bradley Chamber of Commerce vice president of economic development Gary Farlow came before the County Commission and the City Council to request funding that is needed to secure a new capital investment and relocate equipment and jobs from other Whirlpool facilities to Cleveland. It is hoped the relocation of the equipment and jobs will result in additional tax revenue and payroll for Bradley County and the City of Cleveland, but the announcement comes with a cost.

Whirlpool recently announced the closure of their Oxford, Mississippi plant in order to consolidate North American production of built-in ovens and cook-tops. The cost factors of moving that operation and equipment to Cleveland is \$3 million. Farlow said, "We're looking for a third, a third, and a third." \$1 million each from the State, County and City. Part of the cost has been absorbed by the state of Tennessee who stepped up and went more than a third in terms of incentives leaving \$2 million needed lo-

cally. Both the City Council and the Commission agreed to the funding and passed a resolution approving funding support to the Bradley / Cleveland Industrial Development Board (IDB) for assistance to Whirlpool Cleveland.

An appropriation of \$1 million dollars each will be made to the IDB, who will in turn take that money and make a loan to Whirlpool in the amount of \$2 million. One of the provisions is that the loan amount will be forgiven in the amount of 10% per year so long as Whirlpool maintains their manufacturing presence in Bradley County for a minimum of ten years. Farlow described this as a clawback provision, meaning they will give them a grant to do this, and if for some reason Whirlpool decides to shut this plant down within a ten year period they would have to pay back the balance of the loan.

Due to both the County and the City having just adopted their budgets for the next fiscal year, the reimbursement for the \$2 million isn't required until July 2009, so there won't be an immediate impact on the budget this year.

It is hoped that additional tax

revenue to pay for the loan will be generated from moving the \$14 million dollars worth of equipment to Bradley County. According to Farlow, "We still have some time to figure out the best way to finance this."

Since cities and counties cannot lend credit or give money directly to a company, it must be done through the

Taylor, Davis Fair, Mike Sharp, and Dr. Robert Taylor.

The state passed legislation authorizing municipalities the right to set up boards in order to grant certain tax exempt financing. The board can acquire a project or construct a facility and lease it, or give it to a private company. If revenue bonds are needed to pay

money.

Government needs a vehicle such as the IDB in order to give funds to private entities. Once government has voted to give funds to the IDB, they cannot take it back and have very little control on how those funds are spent.

Last month a public hearing was held concerning the pro-

loan will be used to refinance the debt that Lee University has already on its Jones Hall dining facility and Hicks Hall. The new money portion of the loan will go towards financing the new Brinsfield dorms and to refinance the acquisition of the old Mayfield school.

In this instance it has been said that the board is not liable in any way in connection with the debt. Its is a private placement loan between Regions and Lee University but it is not clear why the Health and Education Board / Industrial Development Board be involved in the process.

The IDB meeting was listed in the same legal notice as the Health and Education Facilities Board meeting legal notice. When asked why both were in the same notice, Thomas Tisdale, attorney for both boards said, "I asked the attorney for Lee Univ. to include it when he prepared the notice. Since we've got the same members and the same meeting date, I just kinda piggy backed to save some money for the IDB because they have no income."

If they have no income, and they do not cost anything to the local taxpayer - how do they operate?



Bradley / Cleveland Industrial Development Board members
Left; Mike Sharp, Davis Fair, Scott Taylor, Robert Carr Jr.,
Dr. Robert Taylor, Lee Stuart, and (Ken Rayburn - not pictured)

Industrial Development Board. The Bradley/Cleveland Industrial Development Board was created by elected officials on the City Council and County Commission and is made up of seven appointed members: Robert Carr Jr., Lee Stuart, Ken Rayburn, Scott

for the project they get a somewhat lower interest rate because they are exempt from income taxes. It only costs the taxpayers of Bradley County and Cleveland if extra tax collection doesn't exceed the gift. The gift can be county owned land, structures, tax breaks or

posed issuance of tax exempt obligations in the maximum amount of \$3,750,000 by the Health and Education Facilities Board whose members are the same as the IDB.

Regions Bank is providing yet another loan to Lee University. The proceeds for the