



# Hello Hamilton County

September 2008

## E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

*"The reward of a thing well done is to have done it."*

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Super Jobs Center Exceeds Performance Measures!

During the challenging economic situation we currently face, job placement services are more important than ever. So we're pleased to announce that the Hamilton County Super Jobs Center achieved outstanding results between July 2007 and June 2008. Not only did the Super Jobs Center exceed its goals, it is the most successful metropolitan One Stop Job Center in the state!

The Super Jobs Center provides services for job seekers interested in employment in the Cincinnati Area, and it partners with employers who have staffing needs. Services provided include referring job candidates to employers, providing customized training for employers' specific positions, hosting job fairs, publishing job postings, and testing and screening job candidates.

The Super Jobs Center's success is reflected in these facts:

- **One Stop Registrants** totaled 25,671—366% of goal
- **Total Full-Time Employments** totaled 3,539—153% of goal

- **Ex-offender Employments** totaled 303—three times the goal
- **Employment in High Demand industries** totaled 1,247—328% of goal
- **Retention rate** for employment was 87.8%--103% of goal
- **Total employers served** was 1,102—153% of goal

No other county comes close to our success. Using the state's measuring stick, our Cincinnati/Hamilton County effort saw 3,809 job placements in 2007. Using the same measurement, Summit County was the next leading county, at 1812. We more than doubled the next best performer!

Hamilton County Commissioner David Pepper commented on the results, saying, "Particularly with all the challenges of this tough economic time, the results truly are impressive. Every performance measure was exceeded—and in most cases, in dramatic fashion! This is a performance we can all be proud of. And another good example of the County and City working together for the betterment of our citizens



Super Jobs, located at 1916 Central Parkway, placed 3539 citizens into full time employment from July 2007 through June 2008.

and its businesses."

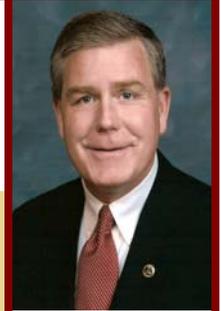
In developing the Banks project, the Cincinnati City Council and Hamilton County Commissioners directed that Super Jobs services be targeted at the construction industry in general and specifically toward the Banks project. Elected leaders are hoping to see the same sort of impact from Super Jobs with the construction trades and on the Banks project. This is consistent with the City and County economic inclusion policy which aspires to not only build a project on the riverfront, but also help build the capacity of local businesses and individuals.

For more information about the Super Jobs Center, visit this link: <http://www.superjobs.com>.



*Patrick's Perspective*

## Volunteer Today To Help Ensure the Safety of Hamilton County!



**Patrick Thompson,  
Hamilton County  
Administrator**

Public safety and quality of life are priorities for the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners. We in Hamilton County government are supporting these priorities by encouraging employees and citizens to volunteer to help in the event of a public health emergency.

### **Point of Distribution Volunteers are Needed!**

You can partner with Hamilton County to serve your community and neighbors in the event of an emergency. Hamilton County Public Health is looking for volunteers to assist with Points of Dispensing (POD) in the event of a public health emergency such as a bioterrorism attack or pandemic flu outbreak. A POD is a location where medications or vaccines will be distributed to people within our community who may have been exposed to an infection that may make them sick and which can be treated by antibiotics or a vaccine.

The federal government requires public health agencies to ensure that civilian populations have timely access to these medications in the event of an emergency. In order to reduce travel, wait time and provide a familiar location, Hamilton County will have many community-level PODs.

Each person who volunteers at the POD will have a specific and limited job such as handling paperwork, directing lines or answering questions for an 8 – 12 hour time slot. Time commitment will be minimal for orientation and training exercises. The Hamilton County Public Health Department will train volunteers, so they can feel confident that they know their role and how to help.

As a volunteer, you will be among the first to receive antibiotics/vaccines for yourself and your immediate family — and you won't need to wait in line at PODs to get the vaccines. Also, you'll be

providing a vital service for our community when it's needed most.

### **Citizen/Resident Volunteers:**

If you are not a Hamilton County employee and would like to volunteer to help staff PODs in an emergency, please contact the Hamilton County Public Health Department at 946-7807 or go to this link: [http://hamiltoncountyhealth.org/en/programs\\_and\\_services/community\\_health\\_services/emergency\\_preparedness\\_and\\_response/volunteer.html](http://hamiltoncountyhealth.org/en/programs_and_services/community_health_services/emergency_preparedness_and_response/volunteer.html).

### **Hamilton County Employee Volunteers:**

Hamilton County is encouraging employees to volunteer to provide this vital service. Employees of Hamilton County will be compensated at their regular rate of pay by their respective department for all required training provided by Hamilton County Public Health and will be compensated at their regular rate of pay for all hours worked at PODs during a declared emergency. Hamilton County employees will not need to use vacation time when they are absent from work for the purpose of volunteering at PODs.

If you (as a Hamilton County employee) are interested in more information about assisting your neighbors and community during an emergency, please complete the survey at <http://survey.hamiltoncountyhealth.org/surveys/PODS/>. Employees need a password to complete the survey. The password for Hamilton County employees is 12345.

I encourage you to volunteer today to help with this important initiative for our community.



## Cabinet of Economic Advisors Strives to Share Ideas for Enhancing Revenue Growth



**Hamilton County Commission President Todd Portune addresses the County’s Cabinet of Economic Advisors during their August 7th Retreat.**

Hamilton County is fortunate to have a dedicated group of businesspeople who serve on the County’s Cabinet of Economic Advisors. Their charge is to develop strategies to enhance revenue growth concerning county sales tax, property tax, and interest earnings without increasing tax rates.

On August 7th, the Cabinet of Economic Advisors participated in a full-day session to develop ideas for enhancing revenue growth. County Commission President Todd Portune provided guidance and direction throughout the day to support the cabinet in their efforts. They shared and prioritized many ideas. A second meeting will convene soon, so the cabinet members who weren’t able to attend on August 7th can participate and share their thoughts. Once that happens, Hamilton County leaders can consider the ideas and plan for action.

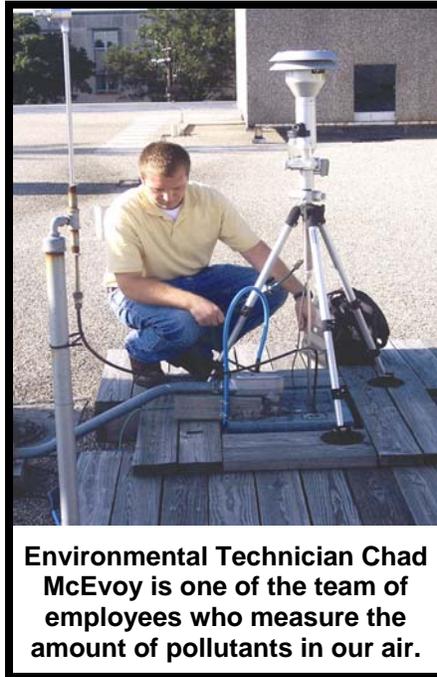
Mr. Portune says, “Hamilton County is blessed to be able to benefit from the great ideas that this Blue Ribbon panel of successful individuals will offer.”

- Cabinet of Economic Advisor  
Members**
- **Pete Blackshaw**, Executive Vice President, Strategic Services, Nielsen Online
  - **Jeanne M. Gollither**, Director, Cincinnati Development Fund
  - **Steve Johns**, Director, Citizen for Civic Renewal
  - **Rob Portman**
  - **Janet B. Reid, Ph.D**, Principal Partner, Global Lead Management
  - **Robert E. Richardson**, President, Laborers’ Local 269
  - **Ellen G. van der Horst**, President and CEO, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
  - **Reverend Jim Vickers**, Executive Director, Valley Learning Center
  - **Morris Williams**, The Williams Group Consultants
  - **Margaret H. (Peg) Wyant**, Managing Director, Isabella Capital



# Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services Provides Important Air Monitoring Service

Though we may not see it, there's a whole lot of microscopic particulate matter floating around our communities. While you may not see them either, there are also a whole lot of people studying and measuring those tiny floating particles to help keep us healthy. They are the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services Air Quality Management Division's Monitoring and Analysis staff, and they're the ones who tell us what's in our air.



**Environmental Technician Chad McEvoy is one of the team of employees who measure the amount of pollutants in our air.**

Every weekday HCDOES' Monitoring & Analysis (M&A) staff measures the amount of various pollutants in the air. Based on this data, the air is assigned a value on the Air Quality Index (AQI): An easy-to-read, color-coded scale which assesses the condition of the air and its associated health risks.

HCDOES sends this AQI value to the media, to inform local residents of the quality of the air and to help them anticipate any air-associated health risks.

When pollutant levels become especially unhealthy, HCDOES also issues Smog Alerts. These alerts are intended to help people protect themselves against dangerous levels of ozone and/or particulate matter to encourage residents to reduce their pollutant emissions.

M&A staff also measure pollen and mold counts daily. By measuring the amount of allergens such as ragweed in the air, M&A staff helps allergy sufferers better plan their days and avoid allergy attacks.

To view the daily pollen and mold counts and the AQI, visit [www.hcdoes.org](http://www.hcdoes.org). Thanks to the experts at HCDOES' Monitoring & Analysis section, you'll breathe a whole lot easier knowing what's in our air.



## Agenda 360 Community Survey 2008

Greater Cincinnati is at an important crossroads. For the past 12 months, business leaders and citizens have worked to develop an Agenda 360 Vision for our region to achieve by 2020. **Now it is your turn to get involved!**

We need your input to determine how to transform Cincinnati USA into a leading metropolitan region for *talent, jobs and economic opportunity* for all who call our region home. To complete the **Agenda 360 Consensus-Building Survey**, go to this link: <http://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/31f5g36fc1?renderlang=eng>

**Please help us by asking friends, family and colleagues** to share their opinions too. All views are extremely important! The survey takes about 15 minutes, and answers need to be in by September 30, 2008. If you need a paper survey or other formats, please contact Steve Johns at Citizens for Civic Renewal at 513-485-6736.

Thank you so much for your participation and for helping us reach your neighbors and all who call this region home.



## Hamilton County Job and Family Services' Children's Services' Family Preservation Program Strengthens and Helps Preserve Families



**Family Preservation participant Misty Robbins, 34, and her nine-child family learned life lessons while planting a garden.**

Hamilton County Children's Services reactivated its Family Preservation program earlier this year. Family Preservation provides short-term intensive case management to strengthen and preserve families. Case management services assist families with addressing the originating safety concerns that created a crisis within a family.

Through intervention, families learn to nurture children and improve family functioning. Family Preservation provides a family with skills to handle any crisis, eliminating future out-of-home placement of children. The goal

is to establish community connections with the family and build a network of assistance for future use. Family Preservation workers help families identify and build upon strengths. They link families with community resources to support their move toward self-sufficiency. They build positive relationships so families become more likely to turn to them at times of crisis.

Four social workers in the Family Preservation unit keep in close contact with families for six weeks, visiting a home several times a week. They maintain flexible schedules so they can

visit weekends or other times when family members are home. They're on-call for crisis situations at all times. "We pride ourselves in empowering families," said Maura Kennedy-Anaya, a Family Preservation worker. "We do whatever it takes to assist families in helping themselves." Erica Bradley, the unit's supervisor, added: "We have more time to make a difference with a family than an Ongoing worker, whose time is limited due to larger caseloads." She noted that Ongoing workers can make referrals to Family Preservation by contacting the Staffing unit.

***Continued on p. 6***



## ***Family Preservation Program, continued from p. 5***

Family Preservation worker Maura Kennedy-Anaya helped 34-year-old Misty Robbins and her nine children plant more than vegetables while tilling a garden this spring. They sowed lessons about teamwork, communication, appreciation, resourcefulness and life.

"Despite all of the hard work and sweat equity, Misty made this a good experience for her children," Kennedy-Anaya said. "That's the way she is. Even though she's had a very hard life, she's a very positive about her kids. You can see it in them."

The neatly dressed children, ages 1-17, proudly pointed out the tomatoes, peppers, carrots, pumpkins, watermelons, sunflowers and broccoli sprouting in early June. Younger kids took turns giving their mother hugs as they circled the brick-bordered soil in the side lot of the public housing townhouse in Avondale.

Robbins, meanwhile, expressed appreciation for Kennedy-Ayana, who had helped the family furnish an empty apartment with items purchased second-hand or secured through donations. The family had only bags of clothing after moving from a dangerous neighborhood. A bag with family photos was tossed after being

confused with bedbug-infested trash.

Children's Services got involved in the case due to an incident where a child went to school with a wet shirt and played in the snow. This brought some problems to the agency's attention. The shirt was wet because Robbins was washing clothing in a sink and trying to dry over a stove. Since then, Kennedy-Ayana found a \$40 washer/dryer that her husband retrieved with their minivan.

"Maura's a great person," said Robbins, smiling as she held the 1-year-old. "She even comes over on Saturdays, when she didn't have to. I've had a good, positive experience with her."

Kennedy-Ayana beams a smile in return as she explains how the children organized in a "bucket patrol" to carry off debris and clear a garden plot.

"Not only is this a project in which the whole family worked together," she said. "The children are being educated on plants and will experience what it is like to care for them and be able to eat them." They also learned about math, horticulture, "good bugs and bad bugs," companion plants and organic gardening techniques.

Robbins mapped out the garden, using a Martha Stewart Gardening 101 book from Kennedy-Ayana. An individual donor contributed \$100 for tools and plants. The Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati donated seeds. Al Neyer Inc. gave bricks from a nearby construction site.

Inside the apartment, donated and good-quality used items decorate a space that once held just air mattresses. Kennedy-Ayana taught Robbins how to shop within budget while furnishing the apartment. Robbins showed off a prize possession: A TV table rescued from the trash and refurbished.

Kennedy-Ayana asked one of the children to show a poster they made for Mother's Day. The children finished the sentence "My mom is great because," with: "She takes care of us by herself." "She's nice." "Best mom ever." "Feeds us." "Gave us all birth." "Never gives up." "Lets us go outside." "Gives us all she can."

Erica Bradley, the Family Preservation unit supervisor, noted how the program can build on positives such as these and help strengthen families. "We're able to put our social work skills to use with a goal of preserving the family," Bradley said.



## Hamilton County's 2008 Employees of the Year Award Recipients

In April, Hamilton County announced the names of Hamilton County's Employees of the Year. These employees represent the best of the best! In this edition of "Hello Hamilton County," we highlight the recipients of the County Hero Award.

Initially, the Employee of the Year Committee planned to award the County Hero Award to one nominee. But because two of the nominees were outstanding, the committee chose to honor two employees. They are Deputy Gregory Sersion of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office and Joe Elfers with the Hamilton County Adult Probation Department.

### Employee of the Year: County Hero Deputy Gregory Sersion Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Gregory Sersion is recognized as a County Hero because he took swift action to save two people from drowning, putting their safety before his own.

Deputy Gregory Sersion has been with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office since 1996. On March 18, 2008, he received a call that two people were caught in rising water at Symmes Park. The first responder to arrive, Deputy Sersion was led to a rushing stream, swollen by flooding rains. He observed two young females, neck high in water, being held onto by three males. The males, the girl's cross country coaches, were screaming that they couldn't hold on any more, and needed immediate help.

Without any regard for his own safety, Officer Sersion sprang into action, rescuing the first victim, and then going back into the wa-

ter to rescue the second, even as she was in danger of being sucked into a drainage pipe.

Once again, with no regard for his own safety, Deputy Sersion successfully rescued a victim from an extremely dangerous situation. The quick actions and gallant efforts of Deputy Sersion were heroic.

Congratulations, Deputy Sersion! Deputy Sersion was nominated by Lieutenant Dan Reid.





## Employee of the Year: County Hero Joe Elfers Hamilton County Adult Probation

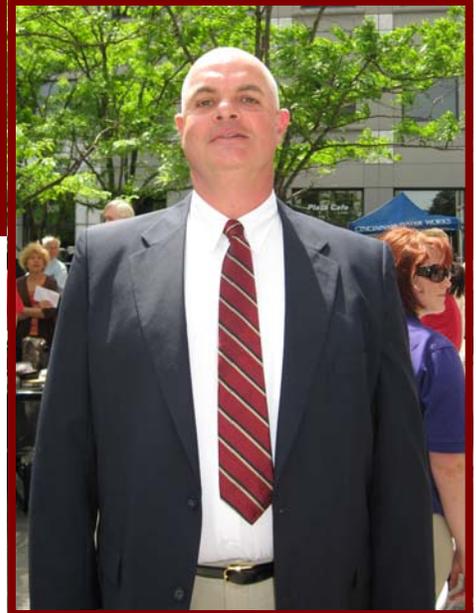
Joseph Elfers, a 25-year veteran of the Probation Department, has for the past nine years been supervisor of the two probation substations located in East Walnut Hills and Price Hill. Mr. Elfers received nominations from a variety of people, including business people and leaders in the community in which he serves and fellow employees. In their words, you can read about why Joe earned the County Hero Award.

“Joe has been courageously working the streets in East Walnut Hills/Evanston to provide more effective supervision of probationers in traditional areas of known criminal activity. He puts himself at risk of harm on a daily basis in efforts to provide a safer community for the residents of the neighborhoods in which he serves,” writes John Schwind, a Hamilton County Probation Officer.

As Keith Glaser, board member of the East Walnut Hills Assembly, attests, “For the past nine years, through his dedication and hard work, Joe has done more than anyone to reduce criminal activity in East Walnut Hills. In many ways, Joe created and perfected the ‘model’ for how a substation should operate to revitalize a neighborhood. This is community-oriented police work at its best.”

“Joe has been available 24/7 when needed. He has never said no when the neighborhood had a problem. While his sacrifice to help our neighborhood is most apparent to us, we also see his sacrifice to help probationers turn their lives around.” Edwin A. Pfetzing, Chair, De-Sales Corner Business Group.

“His impact on the community is obvious in every day interactions with business leaders. The relationships he has built with the community and law enforcement have proven invaluable in identifying and catching criminals. His number one priority is the safety of his officers. He vigorously trains substation Officers to ensure they are as



highly skilled as possible,” says Marie Mortenson, Probation Officer.

“Mr. Elfers doesn’t stop working just because his shift ends. Some supervisors give direction. Mr. Elfers leads you in the right direction. He is the ultimate team player. From seeing your probationers for you to filling out paperwork to arresting/transporting arrested probationers, Joe Elfers can always be counted on to take action to help or resolve any situation.” Michael Jones, Probation Officer.

Such high praise is the result of Elfers putting himself at risk of harm on a daily basis, helping to identify murderers, apprehend numerous fugitives from justice, and remove remarkable amounts of narcotics and guns from communities. He regularly works nights alongside his field officers in order to complete law enforcement objectives and provide crucial street training to those under his supervision. Elfers is an outstanding example of loyalty, honor and dedication.

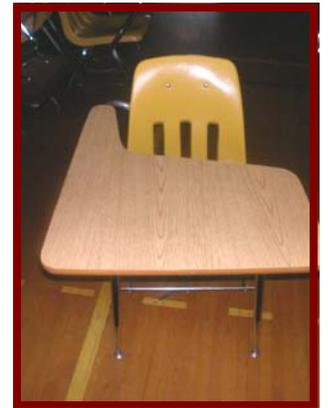
The County, its residents and taxpayers are fortunate to have an employee like Joe Elfers working for them. He was nominated by Patti Hogan, Tim O’Leary, Edwin Pfetzing, Sr., Sarah Sherman, Brandon Mossburger, Bob Dinser, Keith Glaser, John Schwind, Marie Mortenson, Christopher Noble, Leslie Haggard, and Joyce Morris.



## Find Great Items and Bargains On the Hamilton County Surplus Auction!

Check out the Hamilton County Surplus Auction! You never know what you'll find! Items currently for sale include jewelry, laptop computers, school furniture, office supplies, and the pictured 1999 Ford truck with Horton conversion.

See what kind of items and bargains you can find using the county's online public auction! [www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com](http://www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com)





## A Caring Family is Needed!

**Sondra**

**Born January 10, 1992**

Sondra is a born leader; she is independent and is a positive role model, with a strong sense of family. Because her birth family is so important to her, she intends to maintain close relationships with her siblings, even after adoption.

As a smart and confident young woman, Sondra's pastimes include intelligent and positive activities, such as being outdoors, reading history novels and playing basketball or cheerleading. She takes her brilliant sense of humor everywhere she goes, and therefore easily makes friends and adapts quickly to new situations.

This motivated and dependable teenager has set high but achievable goals for herself; she would like to go to college and become a doctor. She wants a family who will encourage her in these endeavors. Sondra understands the importance of learning to make productive choices and would like a family who will provide guidance, but also some freedom for her to learn from her mistakes.

**To learn more about Sondra and others available for adoption,  
Please call 513-632-6366 or visit [www.hcadopt.org](http://www.hcadopt.org).**



## Please post "Hello Hamilton County," so everyone can see what's going on!

Hello Hamilton County is published twice each month. It is designed to inform citizens and employees about news and events related to Hamilton County government and our community in general. You can find current and archived editions on the County's website. If you have questions, suggestions, or article submissions, please contact Laura Maus or Eric Stuckey.

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