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Science and History Museum, visitors bureau could relocate

BY AUSTIN RAMSEY
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

A new plan city leaders say they are considering could result in several notable downtown institutions relocating in the wake of the much-anticipated International Bluegrass Music Center grand opening this fall.

Details of that plan revealed to the Messenger-Inquirer this week indicate that the

Owensboro Museum of Science and History could be forced to downsize and move from its current location at the former S.W. Anderson Building across the street into space where the bluegrass museum currently resides inside the RiverPark Center.

Sources say the museum may no longer be able to meet specifications outlined in a contract signed more

than two decades ago making it a free tenant of the city's 90,000-square-foot historic building at Second and Daviess streets. According to Mayor Tom Watson, museum officials have told him they couldn't survive without the city's annual stipend of more than \$150,000.

"We're trying to figure out what's best for the community," he said. "Moving the

museum would be a piece of the puzzle downtown, and it would also ensure that they stay downtown."

Another part of that puzzle would involve moving the Owensboro-Daviess County Convention and Visitors Bureau inside the new International Bluegrass Music Center and transforming that space

SEE RELOCATE/PAGE A2

City will host new tournaments

Kentucky 2-A championships set for January 2019

BY KEITH LAWRENCE
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

Owensboro has landed the inaugural Kentucky 2-A Championships for basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball and soccer.

"It's a very big deal," Jared Bratcher, sports marketing director for the Owensboro-Daviess County Convention & Visitors Bureau, said Wednesday.

The action begins Jan. 18-20, 2019, with eight teams from across Kentucky competing in the boys' 2-A basketball championship at the Sportscenter and eight more competing in the girls' tournament.

That means 16 teams and their fans will be in town on what's normally a slow weekend in Owensboro.

Bratcher said each tournament will feature the winners and runners-up from four sectional tournaments across the state.

The idea behind Owensboro's bid is to fill hotel rooms during the slowest time of the year.

The 2-A schools have enrollments between 500 and 1,000 students, Bratcher said.

Kentucky has had All "A" Classic tournaments for smaller schools since 1980.

This year, a group of mid-sized schools decided to create a series of similar tournaments.

Bratcher said neither the All "A" or the 2-A tournaments

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RIVER VISIT



Photo by Greg Eans, Messenger-Inquirer.com | geans@messenger-inquirer.com

Michael Morris of Princeton takes a photograph looking out over the Ohio River on Wednesday as a barge passes by Smothers Park in a dense fog covering the river. Morris was visiting Owensboro and stopped to visit the park. "This is where I proposed to my fiancée," Morris said.

OCTC to launch Tech X

Initiative seeks to establish multi-craft technologists

BY BOBBIE HAYSE
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

Owensboro Community & Technical College has been awarded \$400,000 by the KCTCS Entrepreneurial/Innovation Initiative for Non-Traditional Studies, which will be used by the school to unfold Tech X, a new program that will be geared toward helping students master several trades in the amount of time it could take them to earn one certification.



Scott Williams

The Tech X initiative will provide training for a multi-craft technology program in a real-world and industrial environment that "will encourage participants to develop both technical and analytical thinking skills related to work flow and production output," according to a release sent by the college.

David Ashley, OCTC director of external education programs who is helping to kick-start Tech X, said these multi-craft technologists will be trained knowing they are embarking on life-long learning and adjustments as technologies change.

"Having a singular skill is rapidly becoming outdated, but having a multiple skill foundation is marketable in a 'skills gap' world," he said.

SEE OCTC/PAGE A2

Atmos lowering rates 3.06 percent

BY KEITH LAWRENCE
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

Last fall, Atmos Energy asked the Kentucky Public Service Commission for a 5.7 percent rate increase that would raise the average residential customer's bill by \$3 a month.

Mark Martin, Atmos' vice president of rates and regulatory affairs, said Wednesday that the company doesn't expect a final ruling on that request until late spring or summer.

But, in the meantime, the utility is getting ready to cut the average residential bill by 3.06 percent — roughly \$1.76 a month.

That's because of the

recent federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act — also known as tax reform.

Across the country, investor-owned utilities have been applying for rate cuts to compensate for the tax savings they'll see this year.

The New York Times reported in January that economists at the Penn Wharton Budget Model at the University of Pennsylvania estimated that the new law would reduce the power companies' federal tax bill by \$1 billion this year.

In 2021, it said, the sav-

ings would grow to \$5 billion.

The story said customers won't see all of the savings because utilities will likely get to use "part of their savings to fund infrastructure upgrades or to offset future rate increases. And utilities may challenge regulators' findings about how much they have saved as a result of the tax bill."

Kaye Coomes, Atmos' public affairs manager, said because of the tax savings

SEE ATMOS/PAGE A2



Mark Martin



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