

Hot off the press / DEC 2014

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The Cincinnatus Association ©

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The Cincinnati Public Landing, 1849, by Otto Onken.

Time for a Change?

19th century model governs our 21st century city

A powerful sentence is found within the 16 pages of *A Dysfunctional Region*, the report just released by the shared services task force that our member John Frank chaired. It reads simply: “This is something Cincinnatus could do something about.”

The sentence is a reference to a recommendation that an annual award be given to a local official who has done something in the past year to advance the cause of improved public services through collaboration.

But the fact is, the sentence reads like a more general charge to our members: Elevating the public discourse around the promise of shared services is

something Cincinnatus could do something about.

What’s more, it is something we, as members, have said we want to take on. Strategic planner exercises and membership surveys have consistently shown that we don’t want a Cincinnatus that sits on its hands. We want to be part of an organization that leads — and shared services is one area of interest to us.

With that in mind, it is well worth the time of each of us to read the report that John’s committee produced. To get you started, a keys section is reprinted on Page 2 of this newsletter.

Read. Think. Engage.

WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBER: Joe Boyd—Take a moment to say hello.

NEXT MEETING: Our January meeting will be on Workforce Development at CityLink.

PRESIDENT’S CORNER / BOB SCHRAGE

CINCINNATUS WANTS YOUR GOOD IDEAS

People join Cincinnatus Association for a variety of reasons. They come from many backgrounds and provide diverse opinions and interests.

One of our major challenges is to engage our members in projects of interest to them. The Executive Committee discussed this and wants to encourage members to take the lead in offering ideas or projects.

As you know, we have panels including Government, Inclusion, Arts, Education, Marketing and Program. However, we would like to also focus on ideas and projects that are of interest to the membership, even if they do not fall clearly in these categories.

I’m hoping you will lead us in addressing your idea. If it falls inside the panel structure, great. If not, don’t worry. We want ideas that interest you as a member. If you have any project or issue ideas, please let me or any member of the Executive Committee know. Help Cincinnatus Association address what you consider the most important topics or issues facing our region.

▪ **Young professionals wing:** The Executive Committee wants to start a Young Professionals group within Cincinnatus. It would be for young, career-oriented members. It will help young professionals in the Association meet their needs through development of issues and projects, support services, and any other aspect of making an impact through Cincinnatus. If interested in participating, please let me know.

Reach Bob at schrage10@gmail.com.

EXCERPT FROM SHARED SERVICES REPORT

Despite various efforts underway to promote government cooperation in Southwest Ohio, and some good things being done, we as a region are woefully behind.

How can we effectively compete with other regions without a comprehensive plan for modernizing our patchwork system of governing, which derives from the 1800's? Every time this issue comes up, studies are made and some conclusions drawn, and then nothing happens. It is an indictment of our local political leaders that they cannot work across the aisle in non-partisan ways to promote local government cooperation.

There is pressing need for strong public involvement in forming a regional organization consisting of non-elected officials, who have diverse standings, clout, and a lot of funding, to make positive change happen. This organization needs to run a campaign, using social media, op-eds, advertisements, speakers, videos, and whatever it takes to get a message across to voters that there are better ways of doing things by working together.

The mistaken notions that a particular community is best served by "going-it-alone", or that suburban areas are not benefited by what goes on in the city, need to be debunked. There are lots of impediments to change, as recognized in this Report. No light-hearted effort will push through them. We need to have a strong organization formed, with appropriate funding.

We can look to successes in Charlotte, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Northeast Ohio, and Louisville as examples of how others are getting things done. But Cincinnati is unique, and poses challenges that must be addressed in ways that work for us. There are various local groups, as identified in this report, which are pushing in the right direction. We need to channel these efforts, and make changing how we govern our region one of our highest priorities. We can do it if the right people get behind it.

The future of our region is at issue. The real danger is that layers of redundant government are the built-in brakes on progress. Current conditions appear benign. Things appear to be "OK." It's difficult to measure good things that don't happen, or opportunities that are lost. But there are subtle symptoms" - like regional challenges constantly labeled as being caused by the other guy.

Finger-pointing runs rampant. It dominates discussion and masks the ability of the community at large to take responsibility for getting things fixed. So, there's no collective will to address real issues and move ahead. It's like trying to drive with the emergency brake on. As a result, things stay the same.

That's not "OK" — especially in today's fast-paced world. Long term, we will pay the price for not acting now!

READ THE FULL REPORT at www.cincinnatusassoc.org/downloads/CA_141111_A_Dysfunctional_Region.pdf

English Language Learners need our support

In November, the Cincinnatus Executive Committee approved another year of support of the English Language Learning (ELL) Foundation's college scholarship program.

Here's a refresher: In the fall of 2013, our Cincinnatus dinner meeting featured two bright, articulate English Language Learner high school students and their desire to attend college.

Through a collaboration between Cincinnatus and the ELL Foundation, our members donated \$1,150 to provide scholarships for Jose Aulis Cabrera to attend Xavier University and Nancy Giron to attend

Northern Kentucky University.

We have agreed to another year of collaboration with the ELL Foundation to help these students enjoy higher education in the U.S.

Cincinnatus asks its members to consider supporting this important initiative by sending a tax-deductible donation to the ELL Foundation, P.O. Box 19975, Cincinnati, Oh 45219. Include a note that this is a Cincinnatus Association donation.

Contact **Kent Friel** or learn more at www.ellfoundationcinci.org.

Spencer Awards will debut in 2105

The Inclusion Panel is working on the Donald & Marian Spencer Award program. Marion and her late husband were deeply involved in numerous organizations, all for the betterment of Cincinnati. Marion desegregated Coney Island and is still involved in integration efforts. Cincinnati will make this an annual event to honor community contributions that align with the ideology of the Spencers. We will present the awards program on May 12. WLWT anchor Courtis Fuller will emcee. We'll need sponsorship help. Contact Steph Stoller at steph@covap.com.

Leader to Leader is going strong at 8

The Education Panel began its eighth year overseeing the Leader to Leader program in collaboration with the Mayerson Academy and the Cincinnati Public Schools. The program matches business leaders in ongoing, one-to-one relationships with principals. There are now 12 leaders matched with principals. A special salute to member Dick Adams, who is starting his eighth year in his match with Vera Brooks, principal at Roberts Elementary.

ISOP? Put the 'I' in Save our Pig

Thirty bucks. That's all we're asking from each member to help save "Lucky," the statue that Cincinnati sponsored for the Big Pig Gig a few years back. Lucky hasn't been so lucky. He needs some repair.

Write your check tonight. Or donate through our website

Recruit one member and we're good

Our *Serious Problem, Simple Solution* campaign continues to enlist existing members to recruit new members. The problem of too few members (we should have a 100; we are under 80) is serious; but the solution is simple: If each of us recruits one new member, we are more than there. Recruiting tips at cincinnatusassoc.org/recruit.