

CHAMBER NEWS & NOTES

Amazon chief will be Chamber speaker

Company is also upcoming Chamber lunch sponsor.

STAFF REPORT

Amazon.com will be the focus of February's monthly luncheon sponsored by the Campbellsville/Taylor County Chamber of Commerce. The event, which is Thursday, Feb. 16, at noon, will be at the company's offices on South Columbia Avenue. Amazon is also the lunch co-sponsor and General Manager Rob Robinson will be the guest speaker. Robinson has been the general manager of the Amazon.com Campbellsville Fulfillment Center since February 2008. Before this role, Robinson was a senior operations manager at the Coffeyville, Kan., fulfillment center where he worked in increasing responsibility since joining Amazon.com in 2000.

He has a bachelor's degree from Austin College in Sherman, Texas.

Robinson and his wife, Vanessa, moved to Campbellsville with their four children, Trevor 11, Ethan 9, and twin 6-year-olds Bailey and Gavin.

Robinson's hobbies include fishing and tennis, and he says he spends much of his free time boating on Green River Lake with his family.



ROBINSON

The company pursues a strategy of offering everyday low prices across a broad range of products — not temporary discounts on a few best selling items.

For example, it offers 30 percent off books more than \$15 and a Free Super Saver shipping option on orders more than \$25.

Amazon.com began operations in Campbellsville in May 1999.

The company holds core values that emphasize customer obsession, a bias for action, a high hiring bar for applicants, a feeling of ownership to associates and a drive for innovation and frugality as the company positions itself for the future.

Amazon.com orders are fulfilled from 10 international fulfillment centers, like Campbellsville, to customers nationwide and around the globe. The company seeks to be the most customer-centric company ever.

Amazon.com

Amazon.com was founded in 1994 by Jeff Bezos and opened its virtual door on the Internet on July 15, 1995, offering more than 1 million books.

Within 30 days, Amazon.com had sold books to customers in all 50 states and 45 other nations. It has since grown to be a Fortune 500 company that offers millions of items from apparel and accessories to Zydeco music.

Kentucky, Taylor County are changing, Crouch says

State education and workforce expert looks at what state, county offer

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Kentucky is changing, and Ron Crouch says he has the numbers to prove it.

Crouch, director of research and statistics with the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, oversees the development of statistical databases on demographic, social, educational, workforce and economic issues and trends relating to the state of Kentucky.

And Crouch presented some of his findings at the Campbellsville/Taylor County Chamber of Commerce luncheon on Jan. 12.

"We're going through a period of major change in Kentucky," he said.

Crouch says the changes aren't necessarily bad or good, though the state is in decline in some areas.

"And I don't think we necessarily understand them," he said. "We got used to doing things a certain way and change is difficult."

The population of the United States has grown from one billion in 1830 to seven billion in 2011. And Crouch says people today are now living and working longer.

"It's due to longevity," he said. "You're gonna be seeing each other a lot longer than you thought."

A big issue, Crouch said, is people retiring early, living longer and then running out of money.

"They run out of money before they run out of life," he said.

Crouch said Kentucky's birthrate used to be high, and residents were often referred to as "barefoot and pregnant." But that's not the case anymore, he said.

"We are one of the least likely states to have children," Crouch said. "Every kid we have should be educated and productive."

Also changing is that there are more females age 80 and older than men, he said.

"At 79, either men are turning into females or women are living longer than men."

Crouch said another big problem is that of the Baby Boomer generation — those who are now ages 47 to 65 — only 40 percent have a pension plan or 401K plan.

"Sixty percent have none," he said.

And among those ages 65 to 69, Crouch said, the majority of their income comes from working, not retirement or savings.

Crouch said the Hispanic population in the United States has seen major growth in the last 10 years.

"Without immigration, folks, this country would be in major decline," he said.

Saying he is in favor of legal immigration, Crouch said, "We need to bring people out of the shadows."

Crouch says Kentucky is in a good position for the future because it has plenty of water and trees, unlike other countries.

"Water may be the new oil," Crouch said.

Crouch provided several handouts of his statistics to the crowd, some of which said the U.S. birth rate is declining and the death rate will soon increase as the Baby Boomer generation starts to die.

"You can't have old people if you weren't born," he said.

Crouch has developed a national database analyzing trends by Census regions and states. He also has developed profiles for all 50 states, including population by race and Hispanic origin, a population chart showing population trends by age, race and Hispanic origin and tables indicating trends on demographic, social and economic variables.

While there may be a small number of those age 66 to 80 in the U.S. right now, Crouch said that will change over the next two decades.

"That's gonna explode drastically because the boomers are gonna get there," he said. "That's the reality of the U.S. and the world."

Crouch said the population of young people is declining, because the birth rate has fallen.

Turning to Taylor County, Crouch said, the majority of people who work in Taylor County don't call the community home. Nearly 52 percent of those who



CROUCH

work in the community, he said, live somewhere else.

Crouch said Taylor County is considered a "hub of jobs," though most are in the city limits.

Crouch said retailers should realize that their customers are getting older, at the majority of the population being age 44 to 54. But the number of young people could also start to increase

again.

"So, we're becoming more diverse," he said. "Be aware of that issue."

Crouch said Taylor County saw about a 7-percent increase in population from the 2000 to 2010 Census, which is nearly equal to the state average.

He said the community has also seen an increase in female residents but a decrease in males. And more females are employed than males.

"It's obvious to me in Taylor County that you're women are a hell of a lot smarter than your men," he said. "We've got to light a fire under our young men."

Crouch said there are also some jobs today that qualify for food stamps that didn't before. And he said he believes if a person is working, their salary should be enough to sustain them.

"If you work for a living, you ought to work for a living," he said.

Crouch said there is a more defined distribution of wealth in the U.S. than ever before.

"We've got to have our middle class back," Crouch said. "We are progressing. We've still got a lot of way to go."

Another surprising statistic, Crouch said, is the unwed birth rate in Taylor County, which stands at 36 percent. In 1960, that rate was 7 percent, he said.

"That's true across Kentucky," he said. "We've got a lot of struggling counties."

Crouch said he believes there are many issues that need to be addressed at the state level.

"I think we need to rescue Main Street instead of Wall Street," he said.

"Good news is Kentucky looks pretty good. Taylor County looks pretty good. We need to look ahead for major changes. We need to understand the trends and make the right decisions."

NEW INVESTORS

ANYONE INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN INVESTOR IN THE CHAMBER SHOULD CONTACT JUDY COX AT (270) 465-8601 OR VISIT WWW.TEAMTAYLORCOUNTY.COM



UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 16 — Chamber Luncheon (Third Thursday this month)

Feb. 21 — Chamber Board meeting

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