



June 26, 2009

One voice, one result

Behinds the scenes in Frankfort, there was a real struggle before the Ohio River Bridge Project legislation was passed, overwhelmingly.

Critics have charged, repeatedly, that Louisville never can get its act together — never can speak with one voice at the Capitol. Other detractors delight in claiming, dismissively, that the ORBP never will be built, or that, if it is completed, nobody currently alive will see the first cars drive across either bridge.

There's no way to disprove the latter, but that first put-down was effectively squelched during the just-concluded General Assembly session. When all was said and done, and despite all the fits and starts, Louisville's legislative delegation — supported by Mayor Jerry Abramson, business leaders, civic groups and the local Energizer Bunny, attorney-entrepreneur Ed Glasscock — spoke clearly and loudly on behalf of moving now toward creation of a Kentucky-Indiana transportation authority that can issue bonds and identify other revenue sources.

Gov. Steve Beshear led the way by putting ORBP on the legislative call and remaining steady during the backroom brouhahas. Speaker Pro Tem Larry Clark did what he does, and it worked. Senate President David Williams remained a friend to the effort, as he long has been. Rep. Don Pasley, D-Winchester, deserves celebrity VIP treatment at the Derby as a reward for his two years worth of effort on behalf of ORBP. (He might have to refuse, on ethical grounds, but it would be a nice gesture for somebody to offer.)

Indiana has money set aside. Now Kentucky has a mechanism for finding its share of the cost. A bridge opening doesn't seem quite so distant.
