

Opinion

Understanding addiction as a chronic condition

Addiction is often misunderstood as a moral failing or lack of willpower. In reality, it is a chronic disease — one that can be both devastating and, with the right care, treatable.

Mental health also plays a significant role. According to the website, healthcareswfl.org/addiction-is-a-community-matter, around 20% of American adults are diagnosed with a mental health condition each year, yet over half do not receive the care they need. Untreated mental health issues can increase the risk of substance misuse, creating a dangerous cycle. The human body functions as a complex, interconnected system, meaning challenges in one area—such as mental well-being—can have cascading effects elsewhere, including substance use.

Despite the urgent need for treatment, only one in five adults with a substance use disorder receives care each year.

Quitting is rarely as simple as having strong willpower. Addiction is complex and requires comprehensive, compassionate care that addresses both the physical and psychological components of recovery.

To deepen our understanding of addiction and explore the many pathways to healing, the Oldham County Cooperative Extension service and community partners are inviting community members to a powerful presentation by Alex Elswick, a leading researcher and advocate in recovery education and advocacy on Tuesday, July 8 from noon to 2 p.m. Elswick combines

academic expertise with lived experience to bring a unique and impactful perspective on recovery. He



HEATHER TOOMBS
FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCES EXTENSION AGENT

holds a B.A. from Centre College and both an M.S. and Ph.D. in Family Sciences from the University of Kentucky, where he now serves as an assistant extension professor. His work focuses on building “recovery capital”—the internal and external resources individuals need to sustain recovery.

As co-founder of Voices of Hope, a Lexington-based nonprofit, Elswick champions recovery through education, peer support and public policy advocacy. His mission: to replace stigma with science and empower individuals and families to support recovery in their communities.

This presentation is a must-attend for healthcare professionals, family members, educators and anyone who wants to better understand addiction and the tools that make long-term recovery possible. Please register at: ukyoldham.pacecommunity.net/Event/ViewEventProfile?eventId=22014.

Heather Toombs is an extension agent for family and consumer sciences. Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status or physical or mental disability.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ON DEFINITIONS

Dear Editor,
For those that decry the lack of a definition for “data center,” I suggest they Google the definition of “library.”
E. W. Hoelscher, La Grange

TIME TO TURN DOWN THE TEMPERATURE

Recently, some of the back and forth on social media between Oldham residents and public officials has gotten a bit too heated, mostly centered around data center decision-making and its transparency. On one hand, the closed-door meetings between business investors and our local public officials, some of which have been found by the Attorney General’s office to have been illegal, have not engendered trust. The complexity and long-standing lack of transparency by our general assembly on Budget and Appropriations & Revenue bills, which this session led to a last-minute expansion of the state’s tax incentives for data

centers, only exacerbates the community’s lack of trust. Finally, an appeal will be heard June 19 at 9 a.m. of the county’s handling of WHP’s pursuit of a Private Utility designation, which exists in every zoning classification in the county, for a data center. Choosing this approval process, rather than going through a full rezoning process after a moratorium passes allowing the county to update its ordinances, has fed into public suspicion of their willingness to be regulated.

On the other, the discourse concerning the costs and benefits of additional data centers in Oldham County, which already includes at least two, has too often become divorced from context and fact-based decision-making. Data centers range from small facilities under 5000 square feet, with no external noise or generators, which even neighbors would have trouble distinguishing from a storage building, to hyperscale facilities like the Highway 53

proposal with millions of square feet under roof, and hundreds of industrial grade diesel generators. These distinctions are often left out of the discourse.

There are substantial risks of nuisance from unregulated hyperscale data centers, the most prominent being noise (continuous and burst), visual impact from warehouse structures, some local air pollution from on-site energy generation and heat production. None of these risks, if facilities are responsibly sited, scaled and regulated, pose a realistic risk to the long-term flourishing of our children, or our community and its character.

While Oldham County has the highest income and education levels in Kentucky, it also has the highest property tax rates of any Kentucky county, and a number of government services in need of increased funding. The discussion of negatives of data centers often omits the fact that four northern Virginia

counties (Loudon, Falls Church, Fairfax, Arlington) with among the highest density of data centers in the US are also in the top 10 counties in the US for average income. While employment related to the federal government in Washington, D.C. is the main driver of that, the presence of data centers has not only been permitted, but embraced and regulated in ways that can be instructive by these well-informed and experienced populaces over the past two decades.

I ask that all sides turn down the temperature. Embrace public feedback and cooperative participation in a fact-based, rational process of deciding what our community looks like going forward, and focus upon what practical ordinances can best assure that any business that seeks to join our community does so in a way that is maximally, mutually beneficial.

Let’s continue making Oldham great together,
**Lance Pearson, Ph.D.,
Pewee Valley**



NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERTHRU KENTUCKY

Subterfuge, chicanery and duplicity

If there is one thing that is glaring in the ongoing saga of a giant hyper data center proposal, it’s that our elected officials lack perspicacity. The other is that the various hired guns from Western Hospitality and the Oldham County Economic Development Authority are not burdened with the cloak of integrity. They reek of complicity, double dealing and machinations runs amok in the county. County employees are seemingly conspiring to shortcut the will of the people. Ordinances are being fiddled with after they are passed by elected representatives. I’d accuse Fiscal Court of having a manifesto, but manifestos are “public” proclamations

of intent, objectives and motives. Fiscal court’s objectives are surreptitious at best and outright lies at worse.



MIKE DIGIURO

The June 2, 2025 media release from David Voegel is as outrageous as it is duplicitous. The Judge’s actions in this entire debacle are best represented by the Sidestep Scene from the movie “The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas.” In my opinion, most of our elected representatives, the Economic Development President and several of the folks in Planning and Zoning are generally contemptuous of the citizens of Oldham County. They have denigrated the residents and told us that they aren’t going to bother to respond to communications. Kevin

Woosley the 3rd district magistrate, is the only one I believe has been open and respectful in his communications.

The county judge, several of the magistrates, the economic development head, the Mayor of La Grange and various county employees have engaged in clandestine meetings with the developers of the data center — meetings that will probably be declared illegal once reported to the Attorney General. But these nabobs don’t care. They do not fear any consequences from holding secret meetings.

I believe the consensus of the people of Oldham County is to clean house at fiscal court and County Attorney. To vote the scoundrels out; all of them. Except for Kevin Woosley, I agree! Will we lose a couple of good people in the process? Maybe, but that’s the cost of liberty. Clearing out fiscal court

will result in new people on boards and commissions. Perhaps the new court will appoint people with the best interests of the citizens, rather than developers, lawyers and politicians.

Lots of people in the county have proclaimed their disappointment in the truthfulness of our elected officials. They are agitated by the secret meetings held by Fiscal Court. They wonder how boards of unelected members can thwart the needs and desires of the citizenry. They wonder why elected officials won’t publicly state their positions on important issues and why they evangelize for carpetbaggers who have rolled into town festooned with the stench of money. These citizens have obviously not been paying attention for the last 10 to 12 years. To be disappointed, you must have expectations; and anyone who has been paying attention knows

better than to expect this gaggle of politicians to do anything except what they want.

I’ll give most county residents the excuse of not knowing what’s been going on in this county. If you had asked 100 of them on January 1 who their magistrate was, 65 of them would have said, “what’s a magistrate?” Less than 15 of them could name their magistrate and fewer would know their district number.

Maybe we are part time citizens because we have a part time government. Magistrates and city council members are all part time positions. In “normal” times, of the magistrates, only Woosley and Magistrate Kevin Jefferies were consistently communicating with constituents and the community at large. If the other magistrates are communicating, I don’t know how. I have followed all of them on Facebook, which seems to the media

of choice, and rarely if ever get anything from the others. Who knows, maybe they have blocked me.

Between the time I write this and publication, perhaps government will become open and respectful; rather, I predict some fresh hell will be vested upon us.

The citizenry is fed up with the current fiscal court. Fed up with unopposed candidates. It’s time to clean house. Nov. 5, 2025, is the first day to file for candidacy for county offices. Jan. 9, 2026, is the last day to file. We should have multiple choices for every office in both the primaries and the general election. Get together with your neighbors. Find someone to nominate and support. The same inept people on fiscal court will get you the same dismal results.

Mike DiGiuro may be reached at oruigid@gmail.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor should include your name, address and a phone number where you can be reached for verification. Letters should be limited to 500 words. The Era reserves the right to edit all letters for clarity, style and taste. The Era restricts publication of multiple letters on the same topic from the same author to two letters and one per every 30 days. The Era also reserves the right to hold all letters considered libelous or in poor taste. Letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Era staff.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADVERTISING

Ad deadlines are noon Monday unless there is a holiday. Kentuckiana ads are due by 4 p.m. a week prior to publication.

SUBMITTED ITEMS

Any submitted obituaries, news, photos and community page items must be at the Era office by noon Monday for

that week’s publication.

CORRECTIONS

The Era will publish a correction of any error that it is made aware of. The paper will also make clarification of facts that may be misconstrued. The paper strives for accuracy, fairness and clarity in its coverage of Oldham County.