

# **Stonecom Quarterly Issues Report**

For Second Quarter, 2023

April-June

As part of the company's on-going service to the community, Stonecom addressed these issues of significance to the Upper Cumberland during this quarter:

**Issue 1: Conflict in Our World**

Conflict in our world. It seems everywhere we turn, people are in conflict. Neighbors upset. Social media battles. Parents upset with teachers. Employees unhappy at work. Are we a society truly always at conflict? What are the triggers for conflict? What can we do to ratchet down the intensity?

**Issue 2: Upper Cumberland Issues**

A survey of Upper Cumberland residents in April found five main concerns among the respondents: Higher paying jobs, Mental health, Higher quality jobs, Affordable housing, and Homelessness. We sit down with the policy experts to examine the types of jobs available in the region – as well as the affordable housing issues.

**Issue 3: Inside the History of the Upper Cumberland**

Inside the history of the Upper Cumberland. We explore some of the stories, some of the places, some of the tales of our unique region as we sit down with experts in the field. What Upper Cumberland history can we explore? What is being done to preserve this region's history?

The stations sought out guests across our region to discuss these issues on our weekly public affairs program. "Today In The Upper Cumberland" airs each weekend:

Saturday at 6am on 96-9 Highway 111 Country (WUCH), at 7am on Rock 93-7 (WBXE), and 106-9 Kicks Country (WKXD), at 8am on Lite Rock 95.9 (WLQK), and 93-3 The Dawg (WKXD-HD2), at 10am on 101.9/AM 920 (WLIV).

Sunday at 5:30am on Sports Radio 104.7 (WKXD HD3), 7am on Rock 93-7 (WBXE) and on News Talk 94.1/AM 1600 (WUCT), at 12pm on News Talk 94.1/AM 1600 (WUCT), at 6pm on Lite Rock 95.9 (WLQK) and on 101.9/AM 920 (WLIV), at 7pm on 106-9 Kicks Country (WKXD) and 93-3 The Dawg (WKXD-HD2), at 9pm on 96-9 Highway 111 Country (WUCH)

In addition to these issues, Stonecom Cookeville offers more than 70 local news updates per day across its stations.

The stations air local community calendar announcements multiple times per day across all its stations. We also invite local community members to record public service announcements which air across multiple stations.

We also participate in the Tennessee Association Of Broadcasters Public Service Program.

Our stations serve the Upper Cumberland region of middle Tennessee:

WBXE 93-7 – Baxter

WKXD 106-9 – Monterey

WKXD HD-2/93.3 – Monterey

WKXD HD-3/104.7 - Monterey

WLIV 101.9/920 – Livingston

WLQK 95.9 – Livingston

WUCH 96.9 – Cookeville

WUCT 94.1/1600 -- Algood

**Issue 3:** Inside the history of the Upper Cumberland. We explore some of the stories, some of the places, some of the tales of our unique region as we sit down with experts in the field. What Upper Cumberland history can we explore? What is being done to preserve this region's history?

**Program Date:** April 8-9, 2023

**Program Guest:** Public Historian Mark Dudney

### **Overview:**

When you think of historical places, your mind automatically goes to Constitution Hall, or The Alamo, Pearl Harbor, the Lorraine Motel. But history is alive all around us, and the chance to preserve it is something important to the communities where it lives. It is one of the roles of Mark Dudney, he serves the Upper Cumberland's history through UCDD.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Mark Dudney is a historic preservation planner; his mandate is to preserve and promote the unique cultural resources in the Upper Cumberland
- Heritage tourism involves traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories of the people of the past and the present; this can include music, food, art, outdoor recreation, buildings
- Heritage travels spend more, stay more, and visit more often because they are looking for authentic experiences
- History is a catalyst for economic growth; therefore, preserving the past attracts tourism and brings economic growth
- Tennessee is one of the top ten historic tourism destination in the country

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**Program Date:** April 15-16, 2023

**Program Guest:** Dale Hollow Historian Darren Shell

**Overview:**

Newcomers to the Upper Cumberland may not understand the history of Dale Hollow Lake. It was a thriving community, at least parts of it were, before the Army Corps of Engineers decided to make it a lake just before World War II. We explore the history of the region, and the remains that still are housed underneath the water.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Before Dale Hollow Lake was created, the town of Willow Grove was a thriving community with stores, gas stations, schools, and homes
- Dale Hollow Lake was created because the Upper Cumberland needed a power resource in case infrastructure was damaged during World War II
- When forced to leave their home, the people of Willow Grove were heartbroken despite being paid well for their property and held bitterness for the rest of their lives
- It took 9 months to build the lake, a project that could never happen in today's world due to red tape, laws, and regulations
- Parts of the Willow Grove, including the elementary's schools foundation, can still be seen underwater at Dale Hollow Lake

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**Program Date:** April 29-30, 2023

**Program Guest:** Cookeville Regional's Interim CEO, Becky Hull of the American Job Center, and Jeremiah Miller of UC Workforce Development.

### **Overview:**

Cookeville Regional Medical Center needs workers. There are workers across the Upper Cumberland who need a job. The American Job Center coming together with Cookeville Regional for a unique approach to a job fair Tuesday. We're joined by Buffy Key, Cookeville Regional's Interim CEO, Becky Hull of the American Job Center, and Jeremiah Miller of UC Workforce Development.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- CRMC currently has over 400 job openings, including healthcare and non-healthcare jobs (nutrition services, maintenance, IT, and security)
- The Upper Cumberland is becoming a hub for medical services; therefore, CRMC is competing against other medical providers for employees
- Workers are not just seeking jobs, they are seeking careers that will give them quality of life outside work. As a result, CRMC works to create a positive working environment and competitive hours for employees.
- CRMC's mission is to build healthcare communities; consequently, they are investing \$12 million in their staff, including benefits and raises to keep them local

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**Program Date:** May 6-7, 2023

**Program Guest:** Professional Mediator Mark Travis

**Overview:**

We seem to live in a society where disagreement is rampant. No one can agree on anything, or discuss anything, without it becoming ugly quickly. For some, the art of finding agreement is a profession. We introduce you to Cookeville's Mark Travis, a professional mediator.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Several forms of mediation exist; professional mediation is mediation of lawsuits or pending litigation between parties
- Forcing a resolution rarely works; negotiation requires meeting in the middle, and professional mediators work to calmly and efficiently find an agreement
- Typically, negotiating parties communicate through a mediator rather than voicing their perspectives and goals roundtable-style because that often leads to more tension and arguments between parties
- Most cases involve a disagreement about facts; even professional mediation can be as emotional as divorce, as we spend most of our time in the workplace
- Mediators must maintain neutrality, which requires acknowledgment and control of personal biases and preconceived notions

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**Program Date:** March 13-14, 2023

**Program Guest:** Upper Cumberland Development District's Megan Spurgeon and Charles Cobb, and Jeremiah Miller from the UC Workforce Board

### **Overview:**

The Upper Cumberland Development District recently polled Upper Cumberland residents about the biggest issues facing our area at this point. Among the issues described – better jobs, higher paying jobs, and more access to affordable housing. How do we look at these topics, and what are possible solutions? We're joined by Megan Spurgeon, she is the Director of Empower Upper Cumberland. Charles Cobb is an Economic Development Planner at UCDD. And Jeremiah Miller is the UC Workforce Board's Business Services and Performance Administrator.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- The Upper Cumberland is experiencing a perfect storm in the housing crisis- lack of education on home ownership, lower incomes, soaring housing prices, and lack of house availability
- Currently, It is difficult to find a home under \$200,000 in the Upper Cumberland
- Most business owners are 1-2 months from bankruptcy; therefore, it's difficult for businesses to raise their wages
- To many, work culture is just as important as as work pay; improving the work environment is another way to attract employees
- There are more generations in the workplace than have ever been before; appealing to each generation is difficult
- Younger generations prefer more quality time with their family, while older generations prefer more pay



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**Program Date:** May 20-21, 2023

**Program Guest:** Upper Cumberland Development District's Megan Spurgeon and Charles Cobb, and Jeremiah Miller from the UC Workforce Board

### **Overview:**

A recent survey named homelessness, mental health access, better paying jobs, higher quality jobs, and access to affordable housing as the top five issues facing the Upper Cumberland at this point. Today we continue our conversation on three of those topics, jobs and housing, with three experts from the Upper Cumberland Development District.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Skilled workers- including welders, maintenance technicians, plumbers, electricians- are needed across the Upper Cumberland
- The lack of trade workers feeds into the lack of affordable housing
- Four-year universities were pushed on students for years, but trade schools and apprenticeship programs are becoming a more popular option
- Remote work alleviates some childcare issues, as it enables parents to work and watch their children
- Home ownership does not seem like the best option for some people; for example, a single woman might not want to maintain a property by herself
- Understanding of the issues is key to tackling the problems facing our region

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**Program Date:** May 27-28, 2023

**Program Guest:** Overton County Heritage Museum with Director Paula Stover

### **Overview:**

The Memorial Day weekend is partly about starting summer, the unofficial beginning to the summer season. It's also about remembering – thinking about those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms. Looking back at our history – that's something they do everyday at the Overton County Heritage Museum. Paula Stover is its Director.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Overton County was founded in 1806, and included part of Putnam County
- 40% of the counties in our area are named after notable figures from the Revolutionary War and The War of 1812
- The Upper Cumberland, especially Overton County, has always been very remote and isolated; northern Overton County was referred to as "The Barrens"
- The World Wars brought on major change to our area, as locals left the Upper Cumberland for the first time and modernized the region upon their return
- Rural areas in Tennessee did not have transportation to schools until the 1930s or electricity and telephones until the 1940s and 50s
- The Overton County Heritage Museum aims to tell the story of Overton County, featuring several themed exhibits- all run by a group of dedicated volunteers

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**Program Date:** June 24-25, 2023

**Program Guest:** Dr. Christina Mick and Selena Stewart

**Overview:**

Simply do a web search about why is America mad all the time, and you get headline after headline – “Why Americans are so angry at each other,” “The source of America’s rising rage,” “The roots of American rage,” “Why Americans are so angry about everything.” It doesn’t take a scientist or a poll to see it, it’s all around us. Today we turn to two local counselors to get questions on why we are so frustrated.

**Key Takeaways:**

- According to research, reality TV, news outlets, social media, and constant access to information are the main source of aggravation in our culture
- Information overload can put us into a fight-or-flight mode; when we are fearful or stressed, we become more aggressive or completely shut down
- Because we increasingly communicate indirectly through text or email, we are more likely to misinterpret others’ words
- Reality stars, who gain notoriety through conflict, subconsciously influence viewers to engage in more conflict
- We must teach media literacy and discipline to our youth, as social media preys upon the vulnerable and emotional