

Stonecom Quarterly Issues Report

For Third Quarter, 2022

July – September

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: Small Business Culture

We explore economic development in the Upper Cumberland from the state's emphasis on helping areas like the Upper Cumberland to growing small businesses in the Upper Cumberland. Local business supports put into place here have grown while others across the state have not. What is the culture here? What are the challenges?

Issue 2: Diversity In The Upper Cumberland

Diversity is only catch phrase for some. What are the real issues that exist in our community? Is this a diverse community? What does each one of us need to do to examine our beliefs? We explore diversity with Upper Cumberland leaders including what needs to be done to become a more diverse community.

Issue 3: Maternal and Child Health

We examine Maternal and Child Health and the issues in 2022. Where has progress been made? What issues are still there? We also examine the resources available across the Upper Cumberland.

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

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Program Date:

July 9-10

Program Guest:

Cumberland Business Incubator Holly Hanson

Overview:

The Upper Cumberland continues to be a hub for small business. For entrepreneurs who have an idea, and want to turn it into something. There are many resources available throughout the region to help those with a dream – including the Cumberland Business Incubator. Holly Hanson leads that organization based in Crossville.

Key Takeaways:

- Local business owners take on many more costs than they may originally plan for. The Business Incubator comes alongside them to provide a sense of the costs and challenges they will be facing. These unforeseen costs often snuff out business ideas, so having support systems in the community is critical.
- For the first years of a small business, owners must work in the business while simultaneously working on it. Even in a very successful business, owners must be willing to dedicate their lives to the growth of their idea until it can stand alone.
- Traditionally, small business funding comes from banks. You will need to provide collateral for these loans, but even then, the money is not easily given. Because of this, businesses must often be started and maintained from the cash flow of your current job while starting your new business. This can be a huge roadblock for entrepreneurs.
- There are so many local marketing opportunities to take advantage of before businesses go bigger to help maintain steady growth. Contact local chambers and officials to grow healthily in your community first. Explosive growth can be deadly to a small business if it has not had the chance to prepare.

Issue 3: We examine Maternal and Child Health and the issues in 2022. Where has progress been made? What issues are still there? We also examine the resources available across the Upper Cumberland.

Program Date:

July 16-17

Program Guest:

CRMC Director of Women's Services and Labor Rebecca Kojak

Overview:

The state of Tennessee has been focused in recent years in trying to improve the health of infants born in the state. Efforts to try and improve prenatal care. Efforts to work on what happens after a baby is born. Everything from breastfeeding to safe sleep. Cookeville Regional's Birthing Center is one of those resources available to women across the Upper Cumberland. Its Director is Rebecca Kojak.

Key Takeaways:

- The more we learn about childbirth and pregnancy, the more options we are able to give mothers as they deliver and care for their babies. The power of choice is very important at CRMC and their staff works daily to ensure their ability to treat any and all situations a pregnant patient may face.
- Maternal health begins long before pregnancy. All actions we take within our bodies and world have lasting effects. To consider childhood health within our daily lives is crucial because whether a person raises children or not, all of our actions affect our future children as they live in our world that we are creating.
- Routine preventative appointments are irreplaceable if you are planning to become pregnant. Invest in finding a steady provider and prioritizing those visits, prenatal supplements, and treatment of any preexisting issues long before pregnancy.
- While there exists a lot of literature on the benefits of breastfeeding, it is not the only way to nourish a happy baby and mothers should speak to their physicians about their options and best courses of actions for their bodies specifically.

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Program Date:

July 23-24

Program Guest:

CRMC Director of Women's Services and Labor Rebecca Kojak

Overview:

New technologies, greater knowledge – both have changed the birthing process. Cookeville Regional's Birthing Center is at the forefront of that new era. We continue our discussion today about current issues related to infant health, and the safety of mothers with Rebecca Kojak. She is the Director of CRMC's Birthing Center.

Key Takeaways:

- The priority in every pregnancy and birth should always be what the mother wants. Hospital staff are there to encourage and enable the desires and needs of all mothers,
- The guests a mother brings into the delivery room should be considered very carefully. The hours and days after labor need to be reserved for rest, bonding, and learning about how to care for your child. Mother and baby both do much better when they spend these first moments together with fewer disruptions.
- Even if you have had a baby before, each delivery should be prepared for and conducted with an open mind to the new procedures and research that are being implemented by hospitals constantly. Make sure to keep an open mind to new research and best practices as science continues to evolve and learn.
- The earlier a childhood disorder is diagnosed and treated, the better. New tests, vaccines, and treatments are being made available constantly at CRMC and worldwide.

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Program Date:

July 30-31

Program Guest:

UC Regional Director of the Department of Economic and Community Development
Angela Regetko

Overview:

Today we go into the economic and community development work being done on behalf of the Upper Cumberland with Angela Regitko. She is the Upper Cumberland Regional Director with the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Key Takeaways:

- Many companies are leaving bigger cities to move to rural areas as prices increase. This is very beneficial to rural economies but it is crucial to remember to continue to prioritize and support the local businesses that have been here all along. They need to be protected from these flashes of big business growth.
- Interstates and highway all across the Upper Cumberland are being improved in access and efficiency. This has huge benefits for all businesses in our area, especially in regards to distributing our workforces. People can more easily commute to better or new jobs as they are created.
- Not every business is green lit to enter our Upper Cumberland community. The branches of our local government continue to work together to choose new businesses carefully as to keep a strong balance and healthy relationships between existing businesses while also prioritizing creating new, powerful jobs for community members.
- As Tennessee develops new needs, we must also develop new jobs to meet these needs. Working alongside Tennessee Tech to ensure more and more strong graduates enter and remain in our workforce.

Issue 2: Diversity is only catch phrase for some. What are the real issues that exist in our community? Is this a diverse community? What does each one of us need to do to examine our beliefs? We explore diversity with Upper Cumberland leaders including what needs to be done to become a more diverse community.

Program Date:

August 13-14

Program Guest:

Tennessee Tech Diversity Coordinator Dr. Robert Owens

Overview:

Diversity is a much talked about term – so what is the picture of diversity in our area? Is this a welcoming community? What kind of challenges are present across our diverse region? We put that question to Tennessee Tech’s Diversity Coordinator Dr. Robert Owens.

Key Takeaways:

- Diversity is a tough issue for some to understand because they do not understand its true intentions. Increasing diversity truly means “broadening what we have in front of us,” says Dr. Owens. Diversity does not exist to separate us, but to include us all.
- The best work we can do to increase diversity is to recognize what is in front of us and then embrace it. Sometimes, society does a wrong thing for so long that we are closed off to new ideas that are better. Progress occurs when we are able to take an objective, empathetic look at our world and come to terms with what is truly happening without denying those that are different.
- The fear of something different from us, even if that different thing is perceived as being wrong to us based on our religious or personal beliefs, is harmful. Our community needs to expand its respect for others. It is only through this respect for humanity that we will be able to build the wider, stringer discourse that is necessary for us to continue to move forward and progress.
- The best way to learn is to ask questions. Find people in your communities that you can ask questions to and be open to their responses. Do not be afraid to be wrong or corrected. This is how we learn to progress and do better.

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Program Date:

August 20-21

Program Guest:

Connor Giddens And Erin Murray of Mother's Circle

Overview:

Infant mortality rates across the state of Tennessee have remained fairly steady over the last 10 years. There is good news in the numbers. Poverty has decreased in Tennessee among young mothers. Teen births have decreased better than 30% over the last 6 years. But drinking and drug deaths are on the rise. We explore the opportunities that are available for mothers, and their babies across the Upper Cumberland with Connor Giddens and Erin Murray – they created a group to help new mothers. It's called Mother's Circle.

Key Takeaways:

- Mother's Circle works to build a community of support and education for moms in the Upper Cumberland. Many moms struggle with their sudden change in lifestyle as they remain home alone with the baby as their partners return to work quickly. This can be very isolating from the community moms engage with through work and social events they are not able to attend for a period after delivery.
- New moms are often hesitant to reach out for help or admit that they do not have all the answers but it is crucial to absolve this stigma and encourage mothers to reach out to their communities.
- There are so many classes and resources in our communities to educate and encourage women to breastfeed properly. Mother's Circle highly recommends building a support system during your pregnancy to prepare for the birth and engaging in early education about your options and capabilities.
- The journey of feeding your baby is different for everyone. There are so many factors that can alter a mom's ability to feed her baby fully on her own. The issue can often be resolved with the help of a medical professional, and if not, there are more and more safe, healthy options coming from science constantly.

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Program Date:

August 27-28

Program Guest:

Connor Giddens And Erin Murray of Mother's Circle

Overview:

Infant mortality rates across the state of Tennessee have remained fairly steady over the last 10 years. There is good news in the numbers. Poverty has decreased in Tennessee among young mothers. Teen births have decreased better than 30% over the last 6 years. But drinking and drug deaths are on the rise. We continue to explore the opportunities that are available for mothers, and their babies across the Upper Cumberland with Connor Giddens and Erin Murray – they created a group to help new mothers. It's called Mother's Circle.

Key Takeaways:

- The United States is the only developed nation that does not have paid maternity leave. Because of this, many mothers are forced to return to work very early after birth for financial reasons. This pull into the workforce often disrupts breastfeeding, bonding, rest, healing, and stress management for moms.
- Lactation comes with many trials and obstacles that often take a lot of time to overcome through trial and error. Breastfeeding mothers must also pump regularly in order to keep their supply of breastmilk strong. These factors require a lot of time and focus from new moms that they do not always have to give to the practice if they return to work too early.
- The bonding that takes place with children and their mothers early on will affect them their entire lives. These interactions and intentions change how the child will interact with the world and future relationships forever.
- Even though fathers cannot handle the biological responsibilities of the baby, they can make sure the mother is eating, drinking, and resting well as they both transition into this new life. Fathers can be involved with the baby and bond closely through diaper changes, bath time, and general care.

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Program Date:

September 3-4

Program Guest:

Jessica Patterson

Overview:

Today we continue our look at diversity in the Upper Cumberland by focusing on UC Pride, and the work done by Jessica Patterson, and those who lead the organization.

Key Takeaways:

- In its 10 years of operation, UC Pride has seen a lot of change in Cookeville and surrounding communities. Minorities are now feeling more and more comfortable to stay in their communities and feel accepted and supported by their hometowns from the beginning instead of having to leave to be themselves.
- The distribution of information has increased in exponentially helpful ways in recent years, giving local authorities and community members the language and education needed to progress in this diversification and acceptance that has been slowly welcoming itself into our world.
- There have been huge changes in the subconscious relation of the Upper Cumberland community to organizations such as UC Pride. Disapproving online comments and public rejection have decreased to almost nothing in the past decade. This leads to the community feeling much safer to those who previously were afraid to be themselves in public.
- Patterson points out that defining ourselves or others by one facet of their life, such as their sexuality, is pointless and strange. From growing up being shot at for going on a date in a bar to now seeing so many lifestyles live freely in a rural Upper Cumberland community, she is quick to point out the importance of seeing each other as human and respecting the “rights, opinions, and feelings” of all.

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Program Date:

September 10-11

Program Guest:

Small business owners Shehla Rooney and Scott Morrel alongside The Biz Foundry's Tiffany Anton

Overview:

The Upper Cumberland is blessed with many resources to help those with a dream. Perhaps it's a small shop. Perhaps it's a product that you've always wanted to get created. Through the work of The Biz Foundry, that's happening. Today we bring together several business owners who got their start through The Biz Foundry. Shehla Rooney, Scott Morrel, and The Biz Foundry's Tiffany Anton are with us.

Key Takeaways:

- The Biz Foundry is one of many regional resources that exists to foster new ideas for entrepreneurs. This space offers co-working spaces for businesses that may not have their own space yet so you always have somewhere to meet.
- An idea can come from anywhere, and you don't have to be an entrepreneur to chase it! Following your idea can lead to a lot of new questions and doubts as you enter new areas of growth and learn new skills that are necessary to operate your business. Keeping an open mind and leaning on the resources around you is crucial for minimizing your blind spots as you take on all the facets of running a business.
- Failure can be as productive as success! Knowing what works as well as what doesn't will propel you forward in your business by showing you which directions would be a waste of time to pursue.

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Program Date:

September 17-18

Program Guest:

Small business owners Shehla Rooney and Scott Morrel alongside The Biz Foundry's Tiffany Anton

Overview:

One person saw a need in her work, and helped create a product. One person wanted to see if he could turn something he enjoyed into a business. Both turned to The Biz Foundry for help in making that a reality. Today we continue our discussion about how The Biz Foundry works.

Key Takeaways:

- Anyone can own their own business! Each entrepreneur handles themselves and their service in a unique way, and any approach can lead to success. Resources such as The Biz Foundry help you prioritize and focus your efforts to ensure your success, no matter your background or your personality.
- Your market can make or break you. Morrel points out that some markets will sell out of a product while in others, you wouldn't even be able to give the product away for free because there is no need for it. One of the amazing benefits of being a local business owner is that you can truly understand the needs and context of your community.
- When you enter a new profession, such as running a full business, you will have a lot of questions. The Biz Foundry exists to be on call for small businesses to be all of the resources that the business cannot find for itself. The Biz Foundry relies on making personal connections with their small business owners and offering free resources that would be out of reach in larger markets.
- Make sure to get honest opinions on your ideas from strangers and professionals that could be your potential market. Asking the wrong people can result in poor advice or a lack of understanding of the actual need for your product or service, either with a positive or a negative skew.

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Program Date:

September 24-25

Program Guest:

Stephanie Ross, Breastfeeding USA Counselor For The Upper Cumberland

Overview: This year's baby formula shortage brought a lot of attention to the idea of breastfeeding. A lot of misconceptions too, and a lot of controversy. We spend the next two weeks trying to clear up some of that with Stephanie Ross. She is a Breastfeeding USA Counselor for the Upper Cumberland.

Key Takeaways:

- Breastfeeding Counselors through Breastfeeding USA are certified to support families of new children. They advocate for the full family's well-being as they transition to this new lifestyle and take in so much new information.
- Counselors are accredited through over a year of training in order to provide physical, biological, and even emotional support to mothers and families. The goal of Breastfeeding USA is to ensure the readiness of families through any challenge or change in their journey of feeding their baby.
- Tennessee, and Putnam County in particular, has a lower-than-normal understanding of breastfeeding knowledge and practice. There are fewer lactation consultants and breastfeeding specialists here than many places in the country. Breastfeeding USA is a resource for moms to help work against this unfortunate discrepancy.
- There is a heavy focus on moms having a choice in how they feed their children, and while this choice is important, Ross urges parents to become as educated as possible in order to make informed choices. All parents should have the ability to make the best decision for themselves and their child using all available information.

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Program Date:

October 1-2

Program Guest:

Stephanie Ross, Breastfeeding USA Counselor For The Upper Cumberland

Overview: This year's baby formula shortage brought a lot of attention to the idea of breastfeeding. A lot of misconceptions too, and a lot of controversy. Stephanie Ross a Breastfeeding USA Counselor for the Upper Cumberland.

Key Takeaways:

- The recovery time requested by doctors after a delivery is usually 6-12 weeks while most jobs only allow two weeks on average for maternal leave. This proves to be a huge factor in the issue of Tennessee's low amounts of breastfeeding and lactation education. Rural families often have the financial need to return to work much sooner than recommended.
- Workplace flexibility with pumping breastmilk is a major challenge for women. Hourly employees or women in small businesses may not be given reasonable time to pump. While some federal laws exist to accommodate this need, not all women's jobs are protected by this. We need to come together as a community to aid in these changes of stigma and understanding.
- A major issue for women who are breastfeeding is the lack of facilities to pump in at work. Restrooms are contaminated and unsafe while many work areas are too public. This is another area where education and understanding needs to continue to increase so that we can all better care for mothers and children entering our communities each day.