

# 2011 ACTION FOR JUSTICE



## 30 YEARS

**KFTC fondly  
remembers three  
decades of working  
together**



Kentuckians For The Commonwealth is a statewide citizens organization working for a new balance of power and a just society. As we work together we build our strength, individually and as a group, and we find solutions to real life problems. We use direct action to challenge—and change—unfair political, economic and social systems. Our membership is open to all people who are committed to equality, democracy and non-violent change.

We have a vision.

We are working for a day when Kentuckians-and all people-enjoy a better quality of life.

When the lives of people and communities matter before profits.

When our communities have good jobs that support our families  
without doing damage to the water, air, and land.

When companies and the wealthy pay their share of taxes and can't buy elections.

When all people have health care, shelter, food, education, and other basic needs.

When children are listened to and valued.

When discrimination is wiped out of our laws, habits, and hearts.

And when the voices of ordinary people are heard and respected in our democracy.

# Let's Celebrate Our Extraordinary Work

Dear KFTC Members and Friends,

Happy Birthday to us! It's time for a party!! And this very special occasion of KFTC's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday is a good time to recall some of Denise Giardina's words from our 10<sup>th</sup>.



In her 1991 preface to **Making History: The First Ten Years of KFTC**, Ms. Giardina notes how KFTC sprang from the courage, vision, and self-reliance of Kentucky's Appalachian people.

*Here was an organization that did not assume mountain people were not capable of speaking for themselves and must be spoken for. Here was an organization led not by outside organizers but by local residents addressing problems in their communities and hooking up with people in other communities to share resources and ideas.*

That set the stage for KFTC's transformation into a statewide, multi-issue organization.

*After several years of addressing issues like mineral taxation and strip mining, the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition began to grow beyond the mountains and changed its name to Kentuckians For The Commonwealth. The ability to reach beyond the hills and embrace the entire state led to the smashing electoral victory in 1988 which stopped the abuses of broad form deeds in Kentucky. ...*

*... As people have come together from country and city, from mountains and Bluegrass and Pennyroyal and river flatlands, they have learned important lessons. People all over the commonwealth, not just in the mountains, suffer from environmental damage and the practices of irresponsible and greedy corporations. People do not face these problems because they are ignorant. They face them because of a system that gives them no protection from those out to make money at the expense of the general welfare. People all across the state are learning to speak up and demand that protection from their elected representatives, to refuse to blindly accept the assurances of the polluting industries, to assert their right of quality education for their children and adequate services for Kentucky. Kentuckians For The Commonwealth is a homegrown democracy, born in the mountains and benefiting all Kentuckians.*

Though written 20 years ago, these words capture the current character of KFTC remarkably well: we're a home grown democracy, facing the same kinds of problems, and working hard to benefit all Kentuckians.

As a part of this celebration, some special words of praise for the extraordinary "ordinary Kentuckians" are in order, those at the heart of what KFTC has been, is now, and will become. The people I'm lucky enough to know – smart, resourceful, fair minded, hard working, generous, courageous – are some of the best I have ever encountered. People whose values and lives reflect and, in many cases, helped shape KFTC's Vision Statement. And then there are those who came before, whose work many of us know only through stories. These are the people on whose shoulders KFTC now stands, and it is about them and some of their remarkable accomplishments that you will read in these pages.

So on with the party! It's good to celebrate extraordinary "ordinary Kentuckians" and the first 30 years of our homegrown democracy. And here's to the next 30 years. Together, we're working toward a vision. And today, right now, we have our best chance in decades to achieve new economic power, new energy power and new political power. What could be more inspiring than all Kentuckians working together for a brighter future – working together to challenge injustices, right wrongs and improve the quality of life for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Boyce".

Steve Boyce  
KFTC Chairperson

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**Kentuckians For The Commonwealth**

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# 30 Years of Making History

KFTC has a long and rich history. As these pages will show, together we've accomplished victories that have changed lives for the better. We've raised our voices to hold the powerful accountable. We've debated, marched, researched, telephoned, lobbied, written letters and sung our way to a stronger Kentucky. We've danced together, eaten many meals side-by-side, and taken time to enjoy each other's company.

Over the past 30 years, we've built a reputation as one of the most effective grassroots citizens' organizations in the country, with scores of victories large and small. At times we changed the laws to better protect people and the land. Many other times, we changed the argument by inserting the voices of ordinary people.

Our members have identified, organized, and won scores of issue campaigns ranging from coal mine permit fights to new community infrastructure to new statewide tax law to numerous natural resource and land related policies, to amending the state constitution through a statewide referendum.

And we've learned some lessons along the way.

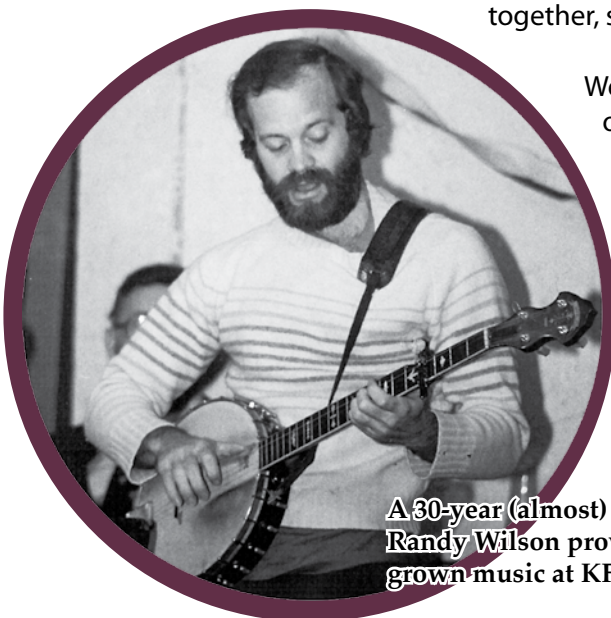
We've learned that people will join to become part of something bigger.

We've learned that being vision-centered is critical. As our campaigns evolve and new members come on board, our vision keeps us connected around a common direction.

We've learned to stay committed to our values and principles, and flexible about our strategies and tactics and practices.

We've also discovered how symbiotic it can be to work on positives while fighting negatives. Our work on clean energy, tax reform and voting rights, for example, evoke the better Kentucky we imagine.

We continue to learn, and re-learn, that real change takes time, but it is possible. We've learned that we can and will achieve success if we keep working together, sometimes over many years.



**A 30-year (almost) tradition...  
Randy Wilson providing home-grown music at KFTC events.**

We still believe that grassroots organizing by directly affected people is the best way to bring about meaningful and

lasting change. As our organization grows, we are committed to preserving our grassroots approach and continuing our emphasis on leadership development. Even as the issues on which we work become more complex, we know the best way to confront them is with skilled leaders and an engaged base of citizens working toward common goals.

And we know we're making a difference. Imagine what Kentucky would have been like these past 30 years without KFTC. Our presence and our voice have shifted the debate in our state, making it viable and often expected

## Henry Riekert

*KFTC chair, 1994-95*

*"Unquestionably the most amazing two things about KFTC are its durability and its record of success. The two are obviously intertwined.*

*KFTC's structure is responsible for both. As a direct-action, member-supported organization, each member is invested in the organization's success or failure. Every member can play a role, and in turn, have a voice among the state's movers and shakers. That's power, and KFTC bestows power upon its members, and through their actions the members return power to KFTC. It's a beautiful symmetry."*

for regular people to challenge seemingly unaccountable power and offer new solutions to long-standing, fundamental problems. We have dared our candidates and leaders to talk about issues, our regulatory agencies to enforce the law, and our communities to believe in themselves.

Although 30 years seems a long time, it has passed quickly for those of us doing this work. We are in for the long haul, and the next 30 years promise even more hard work, action and results. And we expect to have as much fun along the way as we've had up to now.

Enjoy the following pages. They offer just a glimpse into our 30 years, and only begin to record all there is to KFTC's rich history and the many, many wonderful and extraordinary people. And get ready for the next 30!

*"I'm so glad to be a part of a group that's not disillusioned about our system, that is concerned about preserving our democracy, and that feels like we can make a difference with hard work. KFTC has given me hope."*

**Sandra Powell**  
Pike County

*"KFTC is a fine organization with good people. It stands for the people's rights. KFTC brings the meeting to the people instead of asking the people to come to the meeting. We win issues because we stick together."*

**Dillard Coots**  
Leslie County

*"I thank KFTC for existing."*

**Wendell Berry**  
Henry County

## KFTC's Goals of Organizing

**Help people participate** — We have always believed that for a democracy to flourish, all people must be active and participate. A basic premise of our work is that all of us have a right and responsibility to participate in the decisions and processes of our self-government.

**Empower individuals** — We develop citizens into community leaders! Members are urged to try new experiences, learn new skills and celebrate their growth and achievements. We teach leadership and organizing skills, and then give people the chance to practice these skills in a variety of ways

**Overcome racism and other forms of discrimination** — We have learned that the existence and exercise of oppression of any person or community creates the divisions and barriers that keep all of us from realizing our finest hopes and vision. We work to overcome the discrimination that creates and sustains these divisions in our society, our organization and ourselves.

**Foster democratic values** — We believe that all people are created equal, everyone deserves respect and equal opportunities. Kentuckians For The Commonwealth is shaped, directed and run by its membership. Our organization endeavors to become a model of the type of democracy we are working for in society.

**Challenge and change unjust institutions** — Our members want a shared balance of power and equal enjoyment of benefits within our political, economic and social systems. We identify and tackle the root causes of our problems to ensure long-term, systemic change.

**Build organizations** — We make sure that time and attention are given to building local community groups as well as the statewide group. We believe that strong organizations, founded on and adhering to strong principles, make it possible to achieve these other goals.

**Communicate a message of what is possible** — shift our worldview — to have a better community, we must work for a better community. To work for a better community, we must believe that a better community is possible. All of us are influenced by the messages that surround us every day. We work to develop and communicate new messages of what is possible on a large and small scale.

**Win issues that affect the common welfare** — People want to give energy to an organization that deals with real concerns and shows tangible results. The issues that we tackle are chosen, actively addressed and solved by the membership.

**Have fun** — KFTC is living proof that hard work is not all drudgery. We take the time to celebrate.

# Some of Our Early History

People in the southeastern counties of Kentucky, where KFTC has its roots, have an essential cultural relationship with the land, and a strong history of organizing and working for change – labor unions, black lung associations, quilt circles, community efforts to fight strip mining, welfare rights organizations and just caring for neighbors. Early members brought much of that experience and knowledge to KFTC.

Eastern Kentucky also is an area largely known and defined by its abundant natural resources and its long history of attempts by others – largely absentee corporations – to control and exploit those resources. That helped define the issues and power relationships that early KFTC members sought to change.

There are a number of precipitating events that set the stage for KFTC, including devastating floods that struck Central Appalachia in April 1977. Thousands of homes were lost or damaged, property loss was in the hundreds of million dollars and 44 people died. Fifteen counties in eastern Kentucky were declared federal disaster areas.



Flooding in eastern Kentucky.

What was obvious to many Appalachia residents and later documented in several studies was that areas with heavy strip mining suffered the worst damage. A study by Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest, for example, found that mining added three feet to the flood level in the town of Harlan.

The floods and the aftermath added to many problems already prevalent in the region – abuse of the land, inadequate housing, lack of community services, land ownership patterns, and many others. Community-based activists representing more than 50 groups across Appalachia responded by forming the Appalachian Alliance, which remained active until the mid-1980s.

Alliance members worked on many issues such as housing, health care and flood recovery. However, the floods pointed to land ownership and use patterns as one of the primary causes for many of the region's woes. Corporate ownership of large tracts of land often meant there was little available land left to meet housing and economic development needs. And the under assessment and under-taxing of this corporate wealth meant the local tax base was inadequate to provide even a basic level of services taken for granted in other parts of the state.



An early public meeting in Hyden helped convey the findings of the Land Ownership Study and explain the unmined minerals tax, and helped lead to the formation of the Leslie County Concerned Citizens.

An Alliance task force decided to document this. In a major study involving community-based research, the Alliance documented who owned the land and who paid the taxes in 80 counties in six Appalachian states. The Kentucky portion of the *Appalachian Land Ownership Study* included 12 counties and was coordinated by Joe Childers, who later served as KFTC's attorney for many years.

In Kentucky, 76 percent of the land surveyed in the

12 counties belonged to corporations or individuals outside the county, or in some cases to government agencies. Just 25 corporate and individual owners controlled more than a million acres of land or mineral rights, or both.

The top 10 land-owners, with 34% of the land and minerals, paid only 11% of the property taxes. Overall, the top 25 owners, with more than half of the land and minerals in the 12 counties, paid only a fourth of the property taxes.

Clearly, the people who lived in eastern Kentucky owned or controlled (because of the broad form deed) little of the land in their communities. But they did pay a disproportionate share of the taxes.

The injustice of land ownership and taxation patterns was most blatant in Martin County. Just one company, the Pocahontas Development Company, owned one-third of the total surface land in the county, and 55% of the minerals. The company's 81,333 acres of coal reserves were assessed at just \$7 million. And the company's annual property tax bill on these 81,333 acres was only \$76!

These injustices were deliberate. Coal company property was grossly under-assessed across the board. The General Assembly had specifically exempted unmined coal from property taxation. Since the Kentucky constitution requires that all property be fairly assessed and taxed, lawmakers created this exemption by making the tax rate so low – \$.001 versus \$.315 per \$100 of value for other property – that tax assessors didn't even bother to send out tax bills.

This was a political tradeoff by then Gov. Julian Carroll, in order to increase the coal severance tax from 4 percent to 4.5 percent. Severance tax revenue went into the state general fund, with just some of it being sent back

More than a decade before the publication of the *Appalachian Land Ownership Study*, a Kentucky tax commissioner told a reporter for the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, “[T]he coal companies pretty much set their own assessments ... we have no system for finding out what they own.”

## Gladys Maynard

*KFTC chair, 1981-84*



*“We just knew that it made sense to work together across county lines because the problems we faced were similar and needed to be addressed on the state or national level. I always believed that the people could accomplish great things if we organized and worked together.”*

The Concerned Citizens of Martin County started in 1980 when Gladys Maynard and others learned of plans by county officials to relocate more than 100 families from the town of Beauty. Officials argued the relocation project was to move residents out of flood-prone areas. Residents believed it had more to do with valuable coal reserves in and around the town.

“We counted 30 widowed women who had lived there a lifetime, with a grocery store and post office in walking distance,” Maynard recalled. “They were going to move them into a housing project.”

As a hairdresser, Maynard saw many people each week, a role that helped her know what people were thinking and enabled her to pass on information.

CCMC's organizing efforts paid off. In June 1980, final approval for the federal grant was denied – because of the lack of citizen participation.

CCMC went on to tackle other local issues, including the time they occupied the seats of school board members and refused to move until the

board moved its meeting to a room big enough to allow the public to attend.

“At that time there were no open meetings in Martin County. They were all closed meetings,” Maynard said.

In retrospect, Maynard sometimes found it hard to believe that what she helped start had blossomed into an effective statewide organization.

“Our first meeting was around a kitchen table with five members.”

CCMC also challenged local property tax injustices, and that connected group members with folks from other counties interested in the *Appalachian Land Ownership Study*. When they formed the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition, Maynard was elected its first chairperson. She served in this position three years, from 1981 through 1984.

“I think of KFTC as protecting what we have in Kentucky for future generations. KFTC's role is organizing, grassroots organizing. The training you get in KFTC on how to deal with problems, corporations and politicians is very valuable. Citizens becoming involved *has* changed a lot of things.”



to counties where coal was mined. The property tax was a primary source of income for local governments and schools, and it was severely undercut by this tradeoff.

As a result, the local tax base for eastern Kentucky communities – needed to support schools and other local government services – was being cheated of tens of millions of dollars in revenue.

## Coming Together

“Does a coalition of groups, organizations and/or individuals, organized within the coal region or statewide, to work on land ownership issues through the tax issue, make sense for Kentucky?”

That unwieldy question was one that 10 individuals came together to explore at a meeting in Berea on June 25, 1981.

The folks all knew each other. They had a history of working in the Appalachian coalfields around land, housing, community service and environmental issues. They also had a connection to the recently completed *Appalachian Land Ownership Study*.

The participants at this meeting primarily represented organizations that were working on a regional basis on a variety of issues. They included the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund, Kentucky Rivers Coalition (which became the Kentucky Resources Council), the Highlander Center in Tennessee (which had coordinated the Appalachian land study), the Appalachian Alliance, Council of Southern Mountains, and Appalachian Coalition.

The findings of the land ownership study helped give their unnamed coalition some initial goals and a focus on tax policy changes. However, this group also realized that a lot of other people needed to be around the table to bring additional ideas and to expand the base. They made a list and set another meeting for July 20 in Hazard.



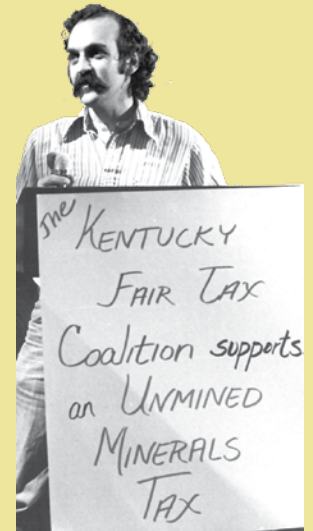
**Everett Akers of Floyd County was arrested and enjoined off his own land while it was being strip mined without his permission. He helped bring awareness of broad form deed abuses to KFTC and was an outspoken member.**

As part of the outreach to local citizens, Childers and others visited groups like the Concerned Citizens of Martin County (CCMC) and the Cloverfork Organization to Protect the Environment (COPE) in Harlan County to explain the findings of the study. CCMC was already challenging some corporate assessments on property that was grossly undervalued. They were using “third-party appeals” – challenging not their own property assessment but that of other property owners. In Harlan County, COPE members were addressing flooding, water pollution, damage to homes and wells and loss of property values all due to strip mining. They initially hoped the new federal surface mining law would allow them to protect their homes by declaring their entire watershed “unsuitable for mining.” Land ownership and tax issues were not as familiar to COPE members.

“When Childers came, that was a turning point in COPE’s focus,” said J.D. Miller. “After his presentation, we began looking seriously at the deeper, underlying issues related to land and mineral ownership in Appalachia, and to talk about what we could do.”

## Herb E. Smith

*Letcher County*



*“People, especially in eastern Kentucky, were getting to know each other. All around the region there was this loose network of people who had worked with each other in various ways. What we didn’t have in those days was a structured connection between us ... until KFTC.”*

*We had a meeting in Hazard and they passed out the hat and we all threw in a little change. I think that was the first time that the organization was trying to figure out how to become an organization.”*

Both groups had learned that while they could win some victories on the local level, it would take legislative change to remove the property tax exemption on unmined coal and other restrictions on local tax revenues. It would take strong enforcement, mandated by the state, to get corporate property assessed at its full value (or even listed on the tax rolls) in order to increase revenue for local services. Similarly, it would take a commitment by state officials to fully enforce the new (1977) federal surface mining law so that water loss and the filling of streams with mining runoff could be prevented.

The July 20 meeting in Hazard brought CCMC and COPE members together for the first time. A number of other individuals also attended, as did members of a Floyd County group, Parents for Better Schools, who wanted radical changes in the education their children received – like the opportunity to attend school in buildings that had not been condemned.

Though each group brought different situations and issues, it was clear that there were common structural injustices underlying each. In sharing their local stories members began to realize that strong local organizing would have to be a basic component of an effective statewide organization.

A steering committee was appointed to develop a statement of purpose and coordinate a larger gathering on August 17 in Hazard. The steering committee met on August 10 at Doss Holler (Miller’s home) in Harlan County to finalize preparations.

Twenty-six people attended the August 17 meeting, including citizens from Letcher, Perry and 10 other counties. The quality of community services, including education, and surface owners’ rights (related more to fair taxation than mining issues at that point) were affirmed as initial priorities.

John Rosenberg suggested “Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition,” and the name was adopted. The following statement of purpose was approved:

Thank you KFTC, for  
your 30 years of empowering  
Kentuckians to create a better  
commonwealth.

The Kentucky Sierra Club  
wishes you a Happy Anniversary!

[www.kentucky.sierraclub.org](http://www.kentucky.sierraclub.org)



# SIERRA CLUB

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FOUNDED 1892

*Sierra Club Mission: explore, enjoy, and protect the planet*

## John Rosenberg

*“A group of us were at what you now would call the founding meeting in Hazard and talked about issues. We had a flip chart and we were trying to figure out what to name it and I’m credited with suggesting the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition.”*



*I don’t know how many additional smaller meetings there really were before we got organized. We hadn’t even started chapters. When you go to the first two or three meetings, I don’t think that people think, “Oh we’re going to be here for 25 years.” But the stronger the group got, the more people felt this is going to be around. It’s a wonderful evolution.*

*All of us want to have good communities where the quality of life is better than it is and where you have more resources and the county’s responsive to the citizens’ needs. There are a lot of inequities in society that I think KFTC is trying to address and that’s important. I’m glad that we’re doing it.”*



On our 20th, we wish the best to our friends & allies at KFTC on your 30th! May we grow older together in a world Fair & free from oppression!

*"The Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition is a group of community-based organizations and individuals promoting more fair and efficient community services through a fair and equitable taxation system, throughout the state of Kentucky, with a particular interest in the coal counties."*

Gladys Maynard of Martin County was selected as the new group's first chairperson. A planning group to develop a "tax reform" workshop was appointed. The hat was passed and \$38 was collected. KFTC had its start.

## Building Strength

Coming out of a successful founding meeting on August 17, early KFTC leaders spent the next months connecting with community and statewide groups with similar concerns, and forming a loose coalition. Planning also was underway for a "tax workshop" in October to educate citizens on tax issues.

A steering committee met on September 3 and 17 in Hazard to keep things moving. For the time being – until KFTC got a more focused platform – it was agreed to keep KFTC's structure loose (although there were a few people who agreed to be the "steering committee," the meetings and decision-making were really open to everyone). It was accepted that KFTC would remain an "alliance of groups." KFTC had no office. Our first official address was in Lovely (Martin County), where Gladys Maynard, KFTC's first chairperson, lived.

The emergence of this new organization in eastern Kentucky quickly caught the attention of other groups. By September 1981, KFTC representatives had met with another new and broader statewide coalition called Kentucky Action for Human Needs, which also had concerns about tax policy, budget cuts and their impacts on low-income families. Members of the Kentucky Education Association (KEA) also were very interested in KFTC's unmined minerals tax proposal that would increase funding for schools in counties where coal was mined.

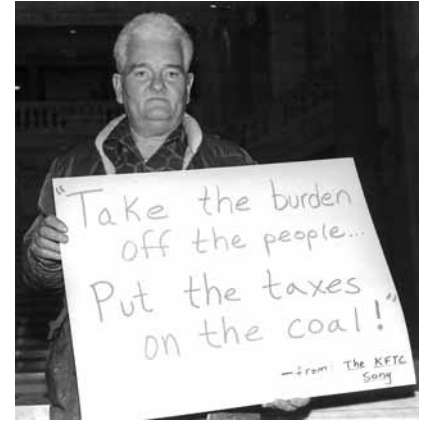
To better understand these issues and the process involved to win legislative change, and to bring all coalition members together, KFTC sponsored a tax workshop in Berea on October 3, 1981. About 60 "Central and Eastern Kentucky residents, community organizers, lawyers and state officials [attended the workshop] to study the possibility of shifting the tax burden from small property owners and small businesses to the vast coal reserves held by huge, often faraway, corporations," wrote the **Lexington Herald-Leader** in what was probably KFTC's first statewide media coverage.

The newspaper described KFTC as a coalition "of more than 30 organizations based in communities throughout the state."

The Berea tax conference brought a lot of energy and statewide connections to KFTC. Eastern Kentuckians had found many other people and groups in Kentucky that were addressing the lack of funding for community services.

After the workshop, KFTC members held several other meetings throughout the fall, preparing for the 1982 General Assembly and initiating local third-party challenges to coal property assessments.

Throughout KFTC's meetings in 1981, the issue of surface owners' rights came up frequently. Members from Letcher and Leslie counties were the first to bring the issue of broad form deeds into KFTC discussions. Though tax



Singer/songwriter Si Kahn wrote *The KFTC Song* after visiting with members in Martin County. These lines are from the chorus. Oakie Harless is holding the sign.



We sing your praises

**KFTC**

For 30 years

of good works for Kentucky



[www.reelworldstringband.com](http://www.reelworldstringband.com)



*Congratulations KFTC on your 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Thanks for being a leader in empowering people and communities – and setting the standard for community organizing.*

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## Union Church

Berea, KY

“Seeking to boldly and creatively  
embody Christ’s life and ministry.”



Union Church congratulates KFTC on 30 years of  
working for social, economic and environmental justice!

injustices would remain KFTC's priority focus at least through the 1982 General Assembly, these voices planted the seed for a broadened focus in the new year.

Late in the year, KFTC got a big boost in its attempt to become a viable organization. The Appalachian Alliance – the group that coordinated the *Appalachian Land Ownership Study* and helped spur KFTC's formation – agreed to "lend" Joe Szakos, its field organizer, to KFTC for one year. KFTC had its first staff person.

Community meetings were held throughout eastern Kentucky through the fall of 1981, following up on contacts made at the tax conference and earlier meetings in Hazard. The meetings informed residents about KFTC's issues and direction, drew in new members and helped prepare folks for the rapidly approaching legislative session.

Several foundations promised to provide some funding for this new but promising organization. Though KFTC did not have a formal membership or fundraising activities at that point, the hat was passed at every meeting.



The stage was set for a new year and KFTC's first legislative session.

### KFTC's first legislative session

On January 7, 1982, in preparation for the General Assembly session that had just started in Frankfort, 36 people attended KFTC's first platform-setting meeting in Hazard. The following issue platform resulted:

- support legislation for an unmined minerals tax;
- adopt a modest increase in the coal severance tax while maintaining the current formula for distribution of the revenue;
- support any changes in House Bill 44 that would be necessary to treat revenue generated by an unmined minerals tax as "new property" tax revenue.

KFTC lobbying efforts began. Citizens from across the state, but mostly from the eastern counties, called and wrote legislators urging them to support KFTC's platform.

Rep. Clayton Little of Pike County agreed to sponsor a bill to remove the property tax exemption from unmined minerals. Later, Rep. William Donnermeyer from Campbell County, the majority caucus chair, became a cosponsor.



Support came from all over the state to remove the illegal property tax exemption for unmined coal.

These efforts got a boost on January 19 when the **Lexington Herald-Leader** printed an editorial endorsing the unmined mineral tax bill. This made many more people around the state, including legislators, aware of this injustice.

On January 26, more than 250 people attended a rally at the state capitol sponsored jointly by KFTC and Kentucky Action for Human Needs, a statewide coalition with similar concerns about major cuts in human services programs (this was at a time when the new Reagan administration in Washington was slashing federal funding to states). Herb E. Smith of Letcher County told the crowd he had "good news": taxing unmined coal at the same rate as surface land

Happy 30th Anniversary to K.F.T.C.



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November 2 - 7, 2011

[www.festivaloffaiths.org](http://www.festivaloffaiths.org)



The Kentucky Foundation for Women congratulates KFTC on 30 years of organizing for a just society in our state! KFW stands with you in working to end discrimination in our laws, habits and hearts.

*The mission of the Kentucky Foundation for Women is advancing positive social change by supporting varied feminist expression in the arts. When women and girls advance, so does Kentucky.*

For more information about KFW see [www.kfw.org](http://www.kfw.org) or contact us at 332 West Broadway, #1215, Louisville, KY 40202

**Congratulations to KFTC for 30 years of fighting for justice throughout Kentucky!**

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***"Pray for the Dead and Fight Like Hell for the Living"*** - Mother Jones

could bring in millions of dollars for human services, local government programs and education.

On February 12, KFTC Chairperson Gladys Maynard and Joe Childers testified before the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee in support of KFTC's tax reform proposals (the unmined minerals tax was not formally introduced until the following week).

"We, the concerned citizens of eastern Kentucky, are willing to impose new taxes on our only industry in order to help provide for the needs of people," testified Maynard. "We challenge folks and legislators from other regions of the state to offer creative ideas that will generate new revenue from other sources ... and other progressive tax proposals. The time to act is now."



After securing a meeting with Speaker of the House Bobby Richardson, KFTC members wait in a nearby room in the capitol for the meeting to begin.

On March 19 (after three postponements), the committee finally heard the unmined minerals tax bill. All the publicity and lobbying paid off – the legislation passed the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee 11 to 1!

The celebrating didn't last long. A couple of days later, instead of allowing the bill to go to the House floor for a vote, the House Rules Committee reassigned it to another committee where it would not be allowed a hearing. They killed the bill.

KFTC members responded immediately. On March 23, on short notice, 40 supporters of the unmined minerals tax bill traveled several hours from eastern Kentucky to Frankfort for a hastily-called rally. They went to the office of Speaker of the House Bobby Richardson, chair of the Rules Committee, demanding to know why he side-tracked their bill. They were particularly curious about a letter Richardson had sent Maynard a few days earlier that stated the bill's "chances for passage appear good ... due to an estimated revenue increase of \$64 million."

The KFTC members refused to leave Richardson's office, negotiating with his staff for nearly an hour before the speaker agreed to meet for 15 minutes. When the meeting occurred it was clear that Richardson knew very little about the bill – a frustrating realization since Richardson had refused to meet with KFTC earlier in the session. KFTC members later learned that Richardson's law firm in Glasgow represented large mineral holding and mining interests. One of his top aides also was heavily involved in the coal industry.

The 1982 General Assembly ended with none of KFTC's legislative goals passing. But a lot was accomplished for this new organization. KFTC had established itself as a new and growing representative of community interests; members learned a lot about how the legislative process works; and many important relationships and connections had been made around the state. With the legislative session over, members would spend the next few months focusing on building an organization dedicated to long-term social change.

### Getting Organized

Since its formation in August 1981, the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition had operated with a loose structure as it focused on the legislative session. That changed at the April 1982 Steering Committee meeting. Leaders made a number of decisions that defined the organization and have lasted through the years:

- KFTC would be an organization of



An annual membership meeting during the 1980s.

- individual members, not a coalition of groups;
- members would relate to KFTC's work primarily through a local or county chapter, and through the chapter with the statewide organization.
- the Steering Committee would be made up of one representative from each chapter, elected annually by the chapter, plus statewide officers (then the chair and vice-chairperson).

Individual membership dues were set at \$1 to \$10 per year, based on ability to pay, and the first \$32 in membership dues were collected at the April meeting. By the end of the year, KFTC had 225 members in 35 counties. The number of members doubled the following year, and reached 2,400 by 1988.

The leaders also wanted to make sure members had the power in the organization. It was decided that the organization's work would be guided by a platform developed and approved by members. Internal decision-making would be open and democratic. And it would be the members, not the staff, who would speak publicly for the organization.

The chapter structure recognized the work being done by a number of local organizations (CCMC, COPE, the Leslie County Concerned Citizens and others) while providing a structure for these local groups to work together across county lines on shared concerns and issues. If members of the local groups wanted to, they could also become members of KFTC and form a local chapter. This model worked well, with most local work taking place in the name of the local group and most statewide work taking place in the name of KFTC.

Just as importantly, the chapter model provided a structure for areas where no local groups were organized to address issues of concern to KFTC members.

This model also reflected two other important tenets of KFTC's approach to change – a focus on local organizing and a commitment to a longer-term vision to develop a statewide multi-issue organization. At this time, KFTC itself was expanding its issue focus, with ending the abuses of the broad form mineral deed the first issue added beyond the initial tax reform concerns. By 1983, KFTC was working with

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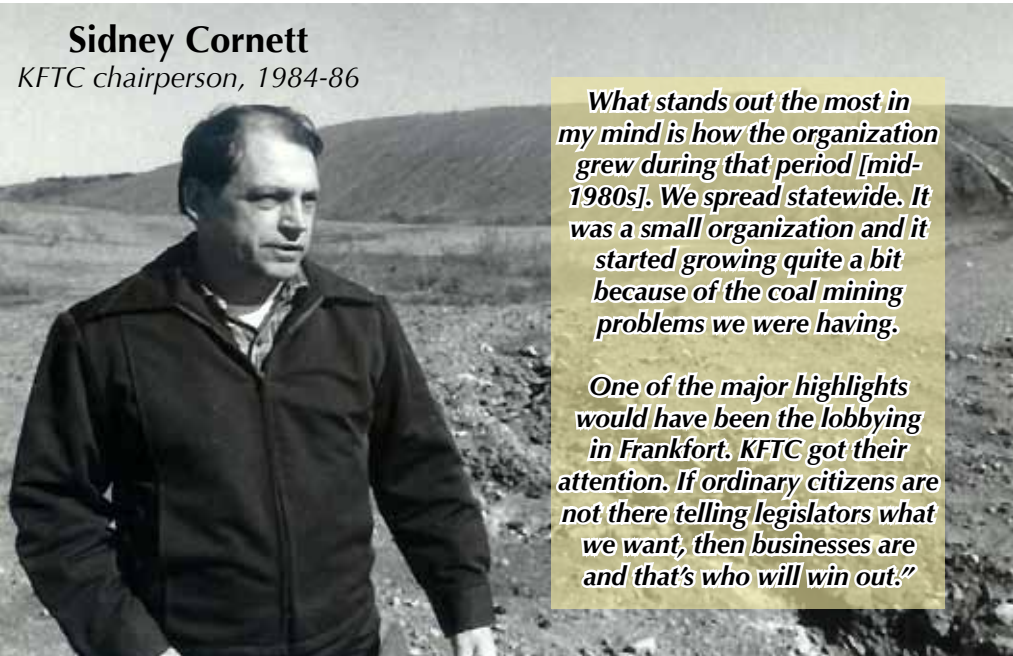
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**Sidney Cornett**  
*KFTC chairperson, 1984-86*



*What stands out the most in my mind is how the organization grew during that period [mid-1980s]. We spread statewide. It was a small organization and it started growing quite a bit because of the coal mining problems we were having.*

*One of the major highlights would have been the lobbying in Frankfort. KFTC got their attention. If ordinary citizens are not there telling legislators what we want, then businesses are and that's who will win out."*



## Earl Wilson

KFTC chair, 1998-2000



*I can honestly say that KFTC was the first group that I came upon that put a lot of planning and thinking into their work before things were done. Issues were really well thought out. There's a structure for things to work their way through. I'm impressed with the leadership and with the process that those leaders in KFTC come out of.*

*I think that KFTC is on the right track. I like the fact that social justice issues are connected to environmental issues. KFTC is the whole package. You can't have the environmental issues without the social justice issues.*

*A diverse group of people are going to make better decisions than a group, no matter how large, that doesn't represent a cross section of the population. A diverse group can see more things. KFTC does a good job at being diverse and it's a goal for us. It's something we need to keep working at, though. You can never stand still.*

*I would like us to be a million members strong in the next 25 years! And why can't we be? We work on such good issues – how could anybody be against us? I guess it's just a matter of waking people up.*

*I think right now that the organization is as strong as it's ever been. There's just an enthusiasm, energy and attitude present whenever I run into KFTC people. It's a self-confidence in ourselves and our work. We've grown a lot in the past couple of years and we're going to keep growing.*

Earl made these comments in July 2006. He died in November of that year.

community groups to address water loss and water quality issues related to coal mining and oil and gas drilling, and hired a hydrologist to guide this work.

As Melanie Zuercher reflected in **Making History: The First Ten Years of KFTC**:

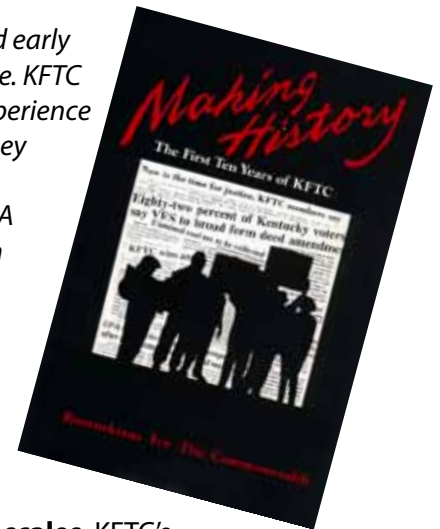
*KFTC began setting long-term goals from the beginning ... KFTC's experience in the 1982 legislature taught the young organization that its chosen issues would not be won easily or quickly.*

*Long-term change and a long-term organization meant organizing people into local groups and equipping members and leaders with the skills needed to make the changes they believed were necessary in their communities, their state and even beyond. An important function of the organizing staff was prompting people to see the bigger picture.*

*KFTC also recognized early the need to be multi-issue. KFTC members would gain experience and understanding as they worked on problems not necessarily their own ... A strong group working on a variety of issues could sustain ongoing citizen involvement.*

Other practices were established in the early years that are still part of KFTC today.

The first issue of **balancing the scales**, KFTC's newsletter, was published on September 9, 1982. The first annual member meeting was held in October 1982, with 70 members adopting the platform, with seven planks, to guide KFTC's work for the coming year (the preamble to the issue planks was added in the 1983 platform). Gladys Maynard was re-elected as chairperson and Mary Jane Adams of Leslie County as vice-chair.





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**Daniel Thompson**  
*Greenup County*

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# Local Organizing / Chapters



The Coxton Concerned Citizens used a press conference on the lawn of the Harlan County courthouse to press their demands for road, bridge and drainage improvements in their community. Hopkins County chapter members celebrated the construction of storm sewers and sidewalks that had been denied to residents of Noel Avenue for decades.



was not part of the original land ownership study). Several public meetings about these issues, as well as surface owners' rights, led to the formation of the Leslie County Concerned Citizens.

Over the next year or so, chapters would form in Harlan, Jefferson, Knott, Letcher, Madison, Perry and Pike counties. In KFTC's first decade, we also had chapters in Lawrence, Magoffin, Pulaski, Clinton, Morgan, Laurel, Fleming, Greenup, Henry, Knox, Trimble and Whitley counties.

In Harlan, Floyd, Letcher and other counties, residents filed third-party assessment appeals of corporate property to address local tax inequities and worked to remove the property tax exemption from unmined coal. In Harlan, Pike and Magoffin counties, water quality issues were at the forefront (including those caused by oil and gas drilling as well as coal mining). Concerns about the broad form deed and mining related problems brought members from Knott, Perry and most other eastern Kentucky counties.

A proposed hazardous waste incinerator in Lawrence County, a similar proposal in Morgan County and a landfill issue in Pulaski County drove those residents to organize with KFTC's assistance. The Fayette, Jefferson and Madison chapters formed largely to support the organizing that was taking place in eastern Kentucky, but also began to

The building of strong local chapters has been a priority since 1982. Early leaders realized that's how many individuals would plug into KFTC's work. Most issues were local, even if change on the statewide level was what was needed to end the injustices. Local chapters have become the building blocks of KFTC's power and key to our democratic process. They are where leaders emerge, develop and practice skills.

In those early years, for many individuals getting involved in KFTC meant getting involved in the local organization already in place – those already in place and a number of other "concerned citizens" groups that would form over the years. In other counties, new groups formed that had a unique KFTC identity and county chapters were the structure through which the local work took place. In some counties, such as Pike, a number of different local groups formed, usually with a specific focus on a particular watershed or community. The KFTC chapter provided a way for folks to share their concerns on a county level and take collective action in the name of KFTC.

KFTC's first chapters were in Fayette, Floyd, Leslie and Martin counties. Fayette County had a number of members who were concerned about tax reform issues and had strong ties to eastern Kentucky communities and concerns. Floyd County members were working on school issues, which tied them to the tax reform efforts.

In Leslie County, KFTC helped coordinate a courthouse research project to find out who owned the land and who paid the taxes in that county (Leslie County

## Fundraising ...



Strong grassroots fundraising has always been important to KFTC's growth and stability, and much of that starts with chapters. Members have held dinners, concerts, rummage sales, raffles, auctions, races and a variety of other events to raise needed funds. The Pike County chapter held a bake sale (left) that also gave members a chance to talk about KFTC's history of accomplishments. Right, Knott County members view the stockpile of Knott County Almanacs just delivered from the printer. For several years, some chapters produced an annual almanac as a fundraiser and education tool.

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**Brett McKim  
JCTA President**

**DeeAnn Flaherty  
JCTA Executive Director**

**Jefferson County Teachers Association**

address local issues such as utility reform and hazardous waste disposal. Later in the 1980s, solid and hazardous waste issues brought chapters in Whitley, Greenup, Trimble, Henry and Fleming counties to KFTC. In Knox County (1989), it was coal-related water issues. In Clinton County (1985), oil and gas drilling was the dominant concern. Residents in Laurel County (1987) were involved in property disputes with the U.S. Forest Service.



The chapter model gave members the opportunity to work on local issues while they plugged into KFTC's statewide work. In Coxton (Harlan County) and Wheelwright (Floyd County), members worked on getting bridges repaired or replaced. In Jefferson County, members used the Community Reinvestment Act to get local banks to agree to more responsible community lending policies. Hopkins County members won sidewalks and storm drainage for an African-American neighborhood in Madisonville that had been denied them for decades. The Union County chapter played a role in the opening of a new Youth Center.

More recently, the Bowling Green chapter has focused on tenants' rights while members in the Northern Kentucky chapter are getting involved in local development issues. Rowan County members continue to work on local natural resource issues. The Floyd County chapter sponsors an annual Growing Appalachia conference to discuss individual and collective ways to live more sustainably. Madison County members are working on a local fairness ordinance and local utility issues. In Central Kentucky, a Safe Restrooms campaign is underway. In Jefferson County, the chapter is working to protect neighborhoods from expanded coal ash dumps.



The Central Kentucky chapter has long been active in local festivals and parades, including the 2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade where they supported local solid waste workers.

Many other chapter and local organizing activities are mentioned in other sections of this book, connected with work on specific issues. KFTC also has a history of working in communities where a chapter may or may not form, including in the mid-1980s in Henderson County, where members were dealing with some toxic waste disposal issues, to Clay County today, where members are working to protect their families and community from a variety of coal mining-related problems. They may yet form a chapter.

Chapter work on local issues with statewide implications is what drew the entire organization into that work in almost all cases. In working on some local referendums, for example, Central

## KFTC CHAPTERS

### Current Chapters

Bowling Green & Friends  
Harlan  
Northern Kentucky

Central Kentucky (*originally Fayette*)  
Jefferson  
Perry

Letcher  
Rowan

Floyd  
Madison  
Scott

### Past Chapters

Clinton  
Henry  
Laurel  
Martin  
Trimble  
Tri-County (*Knox, Laurel, Whitley*)

Fleming  
Hopkins  
Lawrence  
Morgan  
Union

Floyd-Johnson  
Knott  
Leslie  
Pike  
Whitley

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Pulaski

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—*Wendell Berry*

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Kentucky chapter members became aware of the problem of restoration of voting rights for former felons. When the anti-gay marriage amendment was placed on a statewide ballot in 2004, Jefferson County members had already grappled with that issue. In the 2011 General Assembly, Northern Kentucky chapter members helped pull KFTC into more active work on the payday lending problem.

Over the years, KFTC built chapters in more than 25 counties. We still have some chapters that were formed in 1982 and 1983, while others became inactive after only a few years when energy around local issues subsided. Some chapters happened when local residents became active around local concerns and connected with KFTC, and in some cases – such as the expansion to Union and Hopkins counties – KFTC made a strategic move to build chapters there.



Working on local issues, as well as plugging into statewide campaigns, are important to being a KFTC chapter. Madison County members are currently working on a local fairness ordinance in Berea. Starting in the late 1990s, Jefferson County members were part of a coalition addressing community policing issues.

The recent addition of chapters in Bowling Green and neighboring counties, Scott County and Northern Kentucky increased KFTC's geographic presence, and again gives us a chapter in western Kentucky. Today we have 11 chapters, including small rural counties in eastern Kentucky as well as the two largest and fourth largest cities in the state. Our chapters vary in size from around 60 members to more than 1,500.



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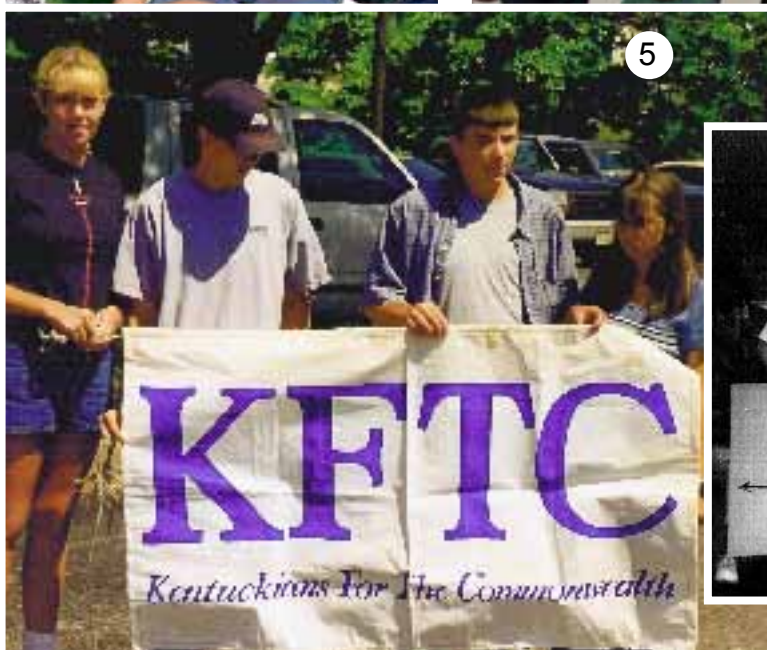
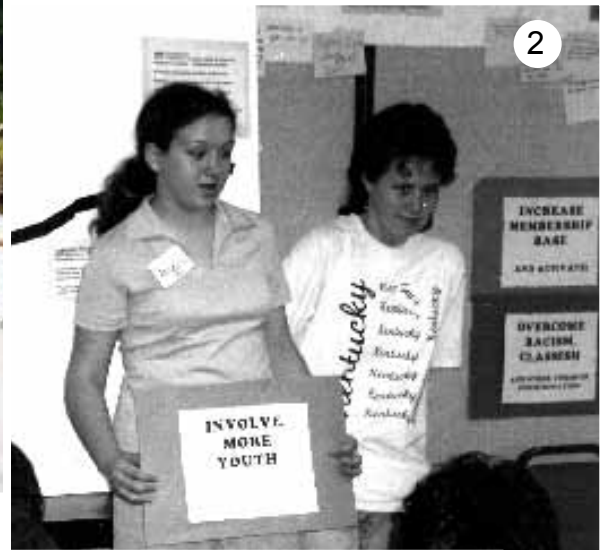
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**Northern Kentucky  
KFTC Chapter**



# The faces of New Power in the next 30 years!



1) Youth "Hands Around The Mountain" celebration after saving Black Mountain, 2) an early Annual Membership Meeting, making their point; 3) at a summer rally to fix the state budget, showing how lawmakers' cuts were impacting them, 4) at a KFTC youth-planned "Youth Candidate Forum" during the 2010 election, 5) in the lead at a march, and 6) at an action to highlight water problems at their Pike County school.



**Ray Tucker**  
KFTC chair, 1992-94

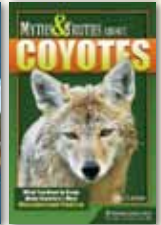
*"KFTC was great leadership development for me. I*

*learned a lot about leading through empowerment and I use that every day of my life. That leadership training plays out in my workplace, in my church, raising my kids – everywhere! When I help someone solve their own problem I empower them to take responsibility for what they're doing. That's the leadership style I learned through KFTC and that's what I practice every day of my life.*

*KFTC has always been great at putting a human face on a problem. It's not just solid waste, it's not just strip mining, it's how it affects individual lives. And it teaches people to say, "This is how this affects me." That empowerment is at the heart of what a social justice organization is. That's what I saw as chair and that's how I face every problem now."*

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# Leadership Development

From KFTC's earliest days, we've had a commitment to leadership development as a fundamental strategy to achieve our long-term vision. Members realized that leadership development and political education were essential to KFTC's mission to change power relationships in order to bring about more just economic, social and political systems. KFTC adopted the approach that every member had the potential to lead and contribute, and that we could build organized power by fostering confidence, skills and the ability to work together among people who historically had not had that opportunity or had been excluded from civic participation.



A 2002 spokesperson training on the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Training leaders has always been part of KFTC's local organizing work. In 1986, this emphasis was formalized in the Kentucky Leadership Project (later the Kentucky Leadership Schools) – intense day-long and sometimes overnight training sessions – that gave leaders a chance to further develop a variety of skills.

KFTC developed a Leadership Development Training Manual – a curriculum guide with more than 40 training sessions such as recruiting new members, running meetings, developing strategies and holding public officials accountable. A series of “Tips for Organizing” articles ran in **balancing the scales**. The goal was that, over the course of each year, members would have numerous opportunities to engage in leadership trainings.

Over the years, KFTC has developed a list of characteristics that describes our training philosophy. Leadership training:

- is group training
- engages the mind, body and heart in fun and creative ways
- draws from the ideas of the group, with a deep respect for the insights, values, talents and energy of participants
- is a continuous process
- implies the ability to reflect
- strengthens the organization
- builds individuals' skills, confidence and understanding
- encourages strategic thinking and collective action
- develops understanding of and commitment to KFTC's goals of organizing
- models KFTC core values, including democracy and equality
- explores connections among social justice issues at local, state and larger levels
- examines and challenges racism, classism, sexism and other forms of discrimination
- asks each of us to learn from, challenge and share with others
- is most valuable when it is applied

KFTC's structure was designed to reflect and reinforce our philosophy of leadership development. Steering Committee representatives can serve only three consecutive terms; Executive Committee positions are limited to two years. A variety of permanent committees and temporary work teams, both statewide and local, gives dozens of members additional ways to plug into KFTC's leadership and decision-making structure.

KFTC also has and continues to support, financially and in other ways, members participating in trainings offered by other groups throughout the country. KFTC staff do not speak to the media, testify in public meetings or vote on organizational decisions. Each of these practices was adopted to emphasize the importance of continually recruiting, developing and expanding the skills of many grassroots leaders.



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# Broad Form Deed Campaign

The issue that most stirred the blood of early KFTC members was the broad form deed.

For most people the fact that a coal company could (and would!) strip mine and destroy a person's land, water, crops and even home without permission of the owner and with no obligation to compensate for any of the destruction was unthinkable. In eastern Kentucky, it was a common practice.

## WHAT IS A BROAD FORM DEED?

Much of the vast coal and mineral deposits which underlie the Appalachian region were severed from the surface land between 1880 and 1920. Speculators and large mineral-holding companies acquired ownership of the minerals using a document later to be known as a "broad form" deed because it gave broad rights to the mineral owners.

These deeds sparked controversy in the 1950s when strip mining came to Kentucky. State courts ruled that broad form deeds gave mineral owners "dominant estate" over the surface land.

by large margins.

That was not the end of the fight, however. As KFTC members have encountered over and over through the years, getting a law passed is only half the battle. The other is getting state officials to enforce it.

That was the case with the new broad form deed law. Gov. Martha Layne Collins refused to enforce the law, giving a coal company claiming a legal right to mine using only a broad form deed a permit to mine the land of Elizabeth Wooten in Perry County. KFTC provided legal representation for Wooten.

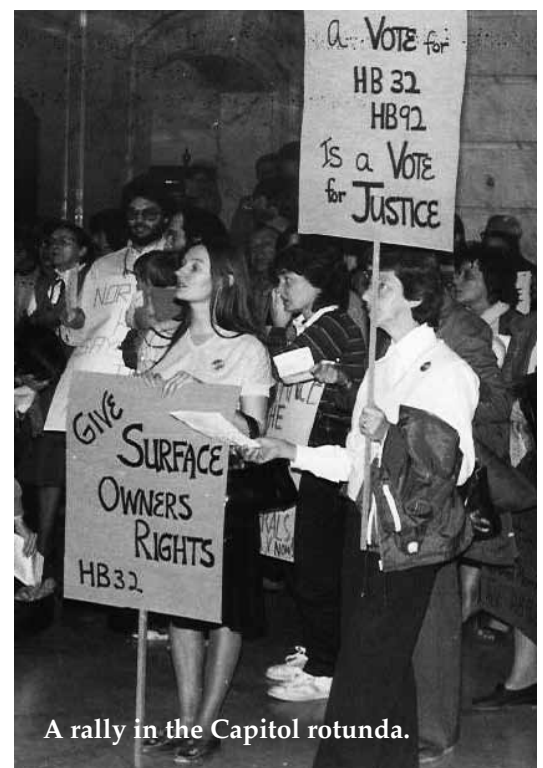
Wooten won her case in the local circuit court, and again when it was appealed. However, in 1987, after sitting on the case for an exceptionally long time, the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled the 1984 law unconstitutional in a controversial decision.

It was not the first time that Kentucky's highest court had struck such a blow against the people. It was in 1956 that the court issued the ruling that a mineral owner could do anything necessary or convenient to extract their coal – without permission from or compensation to the landowner. In the mid-1970s, the court had overturned a 1974 law attempting to stop the worst abuses of the broad form deed.

KFTC members were angry after the 1987 court ruling. With a court

Though addressing the abuses of the broad form deed was not the first issue KFTC took on, it quickly became the focus for much of the early organizing in the Appalachian region. So many eastern Kentucky residents had seen their land or family land taken away by the abuse of these deeds, there were few families untouched. With a commitment to being a multi-issue organization and addressing community issues, KFTC members began organizing around this issue shortly after the end of the 1982 General Assembly. It was adopted as a formal part of KFTC's platform later in the year.

The effort started with pushing legislation in the 1984 General Assembly to stop these abuses. Similar bills had been introduced in every prior legislative session for at least a decade, but had always been denied a vote by legislative leaders representing special interests. That changed in 1984 with an organized group focused on its passage. Not only was a vote finally allowed, but the bill passed both the House and Senate



A rally in the Capitol rotunda.

**Mary Jane Adams**  
KFTC chairperson, 1986-88

*“One highlight of my two years as chairperson was Election Day when the Broad Form Deed Amendment was voted on. I remember being an election officer. People would come in to vote for the amendment and said they didn’t want to vote for any candidate.*

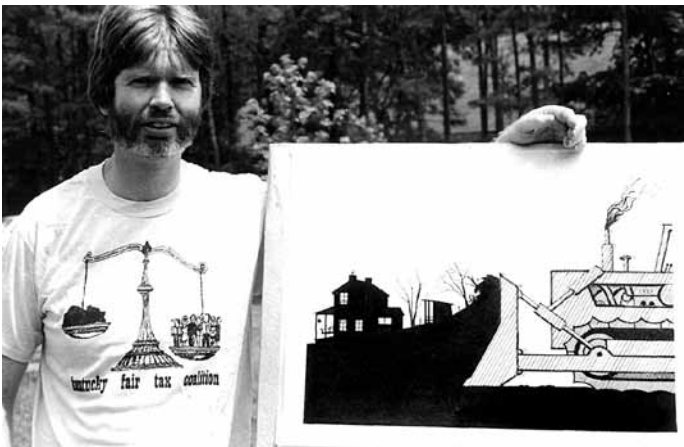
*Raleigh drove me over to Hyden to take the results. As I walked in the clerk’s office, Jimmy Lewis, the clerk, yelled out, “We’re winning really big in Leslie County!” It took me a minute to realize he was talking about the amendment vote. Then lots of people cheered. None of those folks had ever acknowledged my position as chair of KFTC. I was really surprised that they even knew who I was.*

*Then we headed on to [the Hindman Settlement School]. Wow! There were cars everywhere. Everything was moving in a whirl. We had to go next door to use the phone to talk to the press. I was running back and forth across the drive. Debbie [the school cook] had been told by Mike Mullins to fix a ton of food. Everyone enjoyed the evening, especially the verdict.*

*Finally, we had enough of a count across the state to declare the amendment had won. I got to announce the verdict. It was wonderful. More people had voted for the amendment than had voted for president.”*



**On election night, Mary Jane Adams presented a plaque of appreciation to Herb E. Smith and Applashop for their efforts to educate the public about the broad form deed issue.**



**Letcher County member and artist Jeff Chapman-Crane designed graphics for the Broad Form Deed campaign (and many other local and statewide activities).**



**The Hindman Settlement School, the site of many KFTC meetings, served as election night headquarters for KFTC members who gathered to watch the returns.**

**Congratulations on 30 years of grassroots organizing in Kentucky!**



Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM)  
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Knoxville, TN 37917  
865.249.7488 • [info@socm.org](mailto:info@socm.org)



Two weeks before the election, Jeanette Smith, Brenda Cornett, Bernadette Smith and Brenda Reynolds toured the state in a media blitz to secure support for the amendment. They stopped in more than a dozen towns for press conferences, rallies and speaking engagements.

system determined to overturn any broad form deed act of the legislature as unconstitutional, KFTC members decided that what needed to be changed was the state constitution. That would be no easy task. The General Assembly had to approve placing the question on the ballot, and there was not a lot of interest among legislators to do so. In fact, legislative leaders told KFTC we would be wasting our time to even try.

In the three-month session of the General Assembly that began in January 1988, KFTC members from across the state traveled to Frankfort to lobby legislators. Letters to the editor by the dozens appeared in local and statewide newspapers. Hundreds of phone calls were made to legislators (KFTC was one of the first groups to widely publicize and use the toll-free legislative Message Line). "We've had more phone calls and letters about this issue than any I can remember," said an aide to the Senate president pro tem.

Something important happened during that campaign to show the importance and power of a statewide organization with members willing to work on each others' issues. Even though broad form deeds were present in only about a dozen of Kentucky's 120 counties, KFTC made sure that every legislator heard from his or her own constituents in support of placing the broad form deed issue on the ballot.

The efforts paid off. The Kentucky House approved the legislation 96-0; in the Senate it was 38-0. The popular vote would be in November.

Still a young organization, KFTC had never taken on a campaign of this scale or been involved in an electoral campaign. But though lacking in experience and resources, KFTC did have hundreds of members with a strong thirst for justice and a willingness to go all-out to win in November.

With KFTC clearly identified as the leader on this campaign, 1988 was a time of high visibility and growth (there were other significant legislative and legal victories that year). Membership grew by 750. Grassroots fundraising set new records. We learned the power of focusing resources on a single, short-term campaign. We discovered how many allies we had around the state. It became clear that what people heard from family and friends, at church or at the union hall, was more persuasive than what they heard in television or radio ads, or political pundits on talk shows. It was a true grassroots campaign.

And we won.

Eighty-two percent of voters statewide (90% in most eastern Kentucky counties) supported ending the abuses of the broad form deed. The 868,634 votes in favor of the amendment were the most votes any candidate or any issue had ever received in Kentucky up to that time. And it was the only constitutional amendment to ever win in every county in the state.



APPALACHIAN  
CITIZENS'  
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*Celebrating 10 Years of work in Eastern Kentucky!*

We represent KFTC and KFTC members and others in cases involving the degradation of our land, our water, and our health from the destructive effects of coal mining.

We also represent coal miners and their families on black lung and mine safety.

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**COAL COUNTRY** reveals the truth about modern coal mining. The story is told by the people directly involved, both working miners and activists who are battling the coal companies in Appalachia. Tensions are high. It's a "new civil war," as families and communities are deeply split over mountaintop removal mining (MTR). Residents endure health problems, dirty water in their wells, dust and grime on their floors. The miners are frightened that, without MTR, they'll lose their jobs and won't be able to feed their families.

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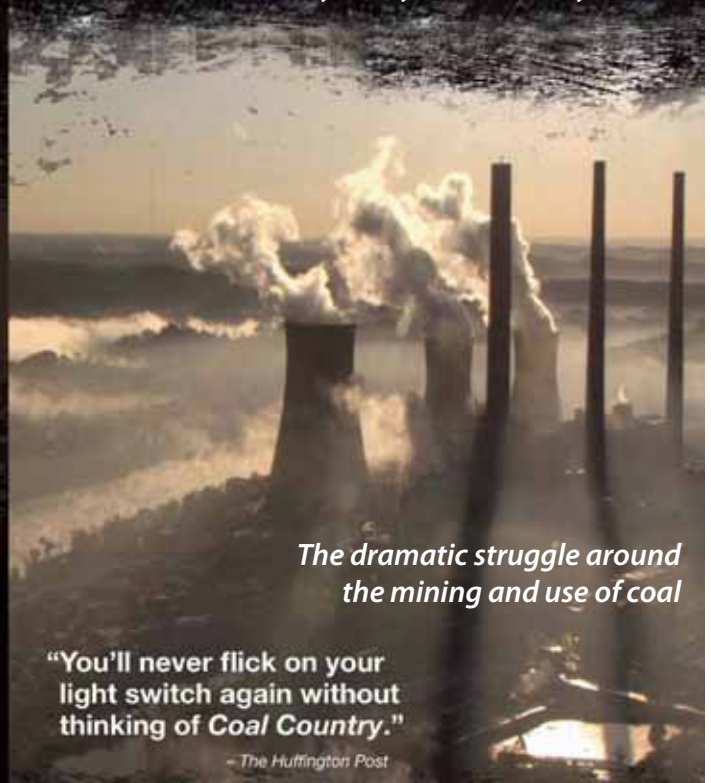
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Mari-Lynn Evans was the 2010 West Virginia Filmmaker of the year, and *Coal Country* was the Best Film of 2009 at the West Virginia Film Festival

## COAL COUNTRY

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*The dramatic struggle around  
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"You'll never flick on your  
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thinking of *Coal Country*."

— The Huffington Post



# Coal, Water and Energy

Dealing with an abusive coal industry has been a dominant part of KFTC's work for 30 years. Today, our work around coal and energy addresses the entire cycle of coal — extraction, transportation, burning and waste disposal. And in recent years we've taken our desire to move from fighting the bad to being a catalyst for positive change by formalizing efforts to bring about a more just and sustainable economy built on a diverse mix of healthy local industries. While the scope is eastern Kentucky, we believe this work has the potential to move our whole region and ultimately our nation away from its dependence on coal and toward cleaner energy solutions that respect our health and environment and build strong local economies.

Since 2003, this work has taken place under the umbrella of the Canary Project, launched in 2003 with a Flyover Festival in Hazard. Much of our activity continues to focus on the damages caused by mountaintop removal, valley fills and other forms of mining as pressing for enforcement of mining laws and for new laws to protect our land and water.

KFTC members living in areas where coal is mined know that many of the problems they deal with every day are the result of the lack of enforcement by state and federal agencies that are charged with protecting the public. This has always been the case and has been the impetus for citizen action and many local campaigns through the years.

Residents on Long Branch in Pike County, Cloverlick and Cumberland in Harlan County, Ary in Perry County and many other communities have dealt with heavy coal truck traffic, often traveling overweight on narrow rural roads and bridges not built for those heavy weights. Dust when it's dry and mud when it's wet – from dirt tracked onto



*"When we found KFTC, we found what we were looking for all of our lives because we both love the forest and the woods and the streams."*

**Bert Begley**  
here with Malvery  
Laurel County



An important KFTC campaign that received national attention was the effort in 1999 to Save Black Mountain. The tallest peak in Kentucky, in Harlan County, was targeted for mining and logging. The campaign was led by students at Wallins Elementary School and supported by students from other counties, including the first-graders from Pike County pictured above

with their teacher Vanessa Hall. KFTC helped negotiate a settlement with the mineral and timber owners to spare the upper elevations of Black Mountain, and won a legislative appropriation for the state purchase of the mineral and timber rights.

Today, KFTC members living at the foot of Black Mountain in the communities of Benham and Lynch



are still trying to save the mountain, and their communities. Several proposed mining operations threaten the towns' water supply and some historic buildings and tourist attractions. The members have a different vision for their communities, one that involves a wind energy project and local jobs. They made their case to the governor when he visited them in April 2011.

# Larkspur Press

*Printers and Publishers of many Kentucky authors and artists*

## Among them

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Anniversary  
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Kentuckians For the Commonwealth  
for 30 Years of Labor  
Making Kentucky  
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Photo: Kentuckians for  
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## KCADP

INVITES

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**Visit us at [www.kcadp.org](http://www.kcadp.org) - Contact us at [staff@kcadp.org](mailto:staff@kcadp.org)**

public roads by trucks – also creates health problems and means people can't even sit on the porches or enjoy their yards.

Often, as in Ary, the company had an alternative route that did not go through residential areas, but it might be a little longer or less convenient. KFTC members in Ary had to initiate administrative hearings to get the coal company to stop using an unpermitted haul road. When they won, the company shut down its small operation rather than use the alternate route – and then told the laid off workers to picket in front of the homes of the KFTC members.

A coal company in Harlan County used similar intimidation tactics against local residents who just wanted to see the law enforced. When the company's sediment pond was filled three feet above its permitted level, the residents got the U.S. Office of Surface Mining to stop the company from operating until it lowered the pond. Company officials told the temporarily idled workers that the citizens who pointed out the violations were the ones to blame for their temporary loss of wages.



This came shortly after the October 2000 Martin County Coal sludge flood that dumped more than 300 million gallons of toxic sludge in the Big Sandy River. Just hours before that disaster, KFTC members in Perry County who were contesting a permit for a similar type sludge pond planned for their community were told by a state official,

“Don't worry, these things never leak.”

That's indicative of the dual challenge of these local enforcement campaigns. KFTC members work both to get the coal companies to *obey* the law, and state and federal regulatory agencies to *enforce* the law. The latter is often as challenging as the first as often state officials are defending weak permits they have granted the companies.

There have been many accomplishments produced along the way through these efforts, including the extension of public waters to dozens of communities where mining had ruined the well water, road repairs paid for by coal companies, changes in blasting schedules and coal haul routes, greater enforcement of coal truck weight limits, the denial of permits and many



A highlight of KFTC's work to protect Kentucky's land, resources and heritage by stopping mountaintop removal mining and valley fills is the I Love Mountains Day Rally, held each year in Frankfort on or around Valentine's Day.

**Daymon Morgan**  
KFTC chair, 1990-92



*"We made the biggest part of our living on that land. We planted vegetables, and we had apple orchards. And there was a lot of wild huckleberry back up on that mountain. Actually huckleberry is a wild blueberry. And wild berries, we picked them. And I've hunted in there, I've dug*

*herbs. And now, that is all gone. It's completely moved away."*

*You know, people have a tendency to not be interested in anything unless they are directly affected by it. Actually, what the coal industry does, it affects everybody. It affects air quality, the water quality, it affects the wildlife habitat, and certainly that's everybody's problem."*

*We gave these coal companies a rough time back then. We did a skit in Frankfort where we buried the state of Kentucky, in the capitol building. We had funeral flags on our cars; the state police led us like a funeral procession through the streets of Frankfort. We pulled up right in front of the capitol and carried the coffin into the capitol. We said Kentucky finally died of an overdose from the coal companies and all the hazardous waste and out-of-state garbage they wanted to bring in here.*

*It did some good. During that time we had a lot of people who were interested because they were affected by it.*

*During the broad form deed campaign we traveled all over the state. I figured we'd win but I didn't think by that big of vote. That was a happy time."*

## Congratulations, KFTC!

Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church and its Social Justice and Green Sanctuary committees are proud community partners of **Kentuckians for the Commonwealth.**

*Congratulations on 30 years of strong environmental and social justice work!*

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# Happy Birthday, KFTC

Love from

**RAINFOREST  
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## Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards

Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards is an organization of concerned community members and their allies who are working to stop the destruction of our communities by surface coal mining, to improve the quality of life in our area, and to help rebuild sustainable communities

[samsva.org](http://samsva.org)

**Join us!**

**Membership meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6pm in our office**

511 W. Main St, Appalachia Va

276-565-6167



So many communities had bad water because of mining, oil and gas drilling, and landfills that in 1985 members took samples of their water to Frankfort and set up a “lemonade” stand outside the offices of the Division of Water. They offered free drinks such as the Brine Brew, Clover Fork Cooler and Sloans Valley Sinker to any taker. The action was successful in drawing attention to the problems, and also put a human face on this issue for some state workers who, up to that time, had only dealt with these problems by phone or letter.

other victories large and small that have made positive differences in the lives of individuals and communities. These types of campaigns continue every day in the areas where coal is mined.

A great deal of the focus of the coal work is on protecting water resources – the wells many people still use for their drinking water, and the streams that flow through communities. A number of recent studies have found higher rates of health problems and lower life expectancy in areas where there is mountaintop removal and valley fills. In 2010, we helped increase awareness of these issues by coordinating testimony before the Kentucky House Health and Welfare Committee about the broad health impacts throughout the cycle of coal.

We have other legislative strategies related to coal, and continue to create awareness and build support for our positions even though we know legislative leaders will do what the coal industry wants them to. KFTC members learned that this is not a reason for backing off. In the last decade, KFTC and allies worked to create more national awareness of the consequences of allowing mountaintop removal and valley fills, even though the Bush administration could oppose any efforts we made. But when there was a change in the White



## Happy Birthday, KFTC

Southwings is delighted to be a partner with KFTC in exposing mountaintop removal and promoting conservation.

# Southwings

## Conservation Through Aviation

*SouthWings is a conservation and public benefit aviation non-profit that provides skilled pilots and aerial education to enhance conservation efforts across the Southeast.*

Visit us at: [www.southwings.org](http://www.southwings.org)

House, the awareness had already been built among federal agencies and lawmakers. We've seen the results as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has begun enforcing the Clean Water Act and limiting valley fills and mountaintop removal.

In the last couple of years, KFTC and some ally organizations have used an aggressive litigation strategy to get water quality laws enforced after research by Appalachian Voices uncovered tens of thousands of violations of the Clean Water Act by coal companies operating in eastern Kentucky. Those cases are ongoing.

We've also focused on the other end of the coal cycle – burning and ash disposal. Members in Louisville are involved in community efforts to stop the expansion of a large coal ash landfill, and operation that at times has left a dusting of ash in the neighborhood. Residents in this part of the county (where there are a number of other plants that handle toxics materials) have a life expectancy 10 years less than people who live on the other side of the county.

Another big victory came in 2010 when we stopped the construction of a new coal-burning power plant. We argued, with documentation, that the plant wasn't necessary, and that all the electricity it would produce could be generated or saved with a combination of en-

ergy efficiency programs and renewable energy – while producing many more jobs.

Although KFTC has always looked for opportunities to support renewable energy efforts – including lobbying successfully in 2004 for the state's first net metering law – the more recent work has given clearer definition to our goal to create an economic and energy transition that moves Kentucky beyond coal.

In the past few years we've begun to grow our work around goals of economic development and clean energy. Three projects have emerged, organically and strategically, from the Canary Project. They provide KFTC with a real opportunity to build a better future beyond coal. KFTC's coming years will be devoted to turning these opportunities into tangible benefits for our state, region and nation.



**KFTC...**  
*Congratulations on  
30 years of action for  
justice.*

**Appalachia – Science  
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*Celebrating your first 30 years !!  
Looking forward to the next 30 !*

~~~~~

KFTC makes Appalachia smile. ☺

[www.wvhighlands.org](http://www.wvhighlands.org)

## Renew East Kentucky

When East Kentucky Power Cooperative agreed to abandon plans for its dirty and expensive coal-burning power plant last fall, it also agreed to enter a collaborative with KFTC and our allies the Kentucky Environmental Foundation and the Sierra Club to explore energy efficiency and renewable energy options for itself and the 16 distribution co-ops. We were able to convince EKPC to shelve the coal plant because we had a sound alternative – a plan we call Renew East Kentucky that would keep rates low for co-op members and generate nearly 9,000 jobs in the region, about 12 times more jobs than would have been created by the Smith plant.

Renew East Kentucky focuses on using the infrastructure already in place in the co-ops – employees, trucks, tools and more – to realize the savings of efficiency and renewables for co-ops and their customers, with most of the new jobs going to job-starved regions of the state. This plan will also create a demand for community colleges to initiate training programs and new local businesses to supply products. We're working locally to educate co-op members on the benefits, within the new collaborative to turn these ideas into real projects, and on the federal level to generate some financial support.



### Sustainable Energy Policy

Our work around sustainable energy policy complements the Renew East Kentucky plan because it emphasizes a Renewable and Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS) and feed-in tariffs, which would pave the way for the residential energy upgrades we propose, as well as considerable new growth in green industries and jobs.

KFTC is a founding member of the Kentucky Sustainable Energy Alliance, a group of 45 organizations working for good energy policy. The group has a wide range of stakeholders – about half small businesses, a quarter economic justice and affordable housing groups, and the rest other nonprofit stakeholders.

In the 2011 General Assembly, KySEA introduced the Clean Energy Opportunity Act, which didn't pass but got a good hearing in the House Tourism Development and Energy Committee (such bills are not allowed to be heard in the Natural Resources Committee). The hearing was a positive one in which legislators got excited about the potential for new green jobs in their districts.

This potential is a major focus of our lobbying around the bill, and our broader organizing work to build community support for these policies. We present it as an opportunity rather than a foil for coal, which has worked well with coal-sympathetic legislators.

## Solar Energy Solutions



*Congratulates  
KFTC on 30 Years  
of Empowering the  
Commonwealth*

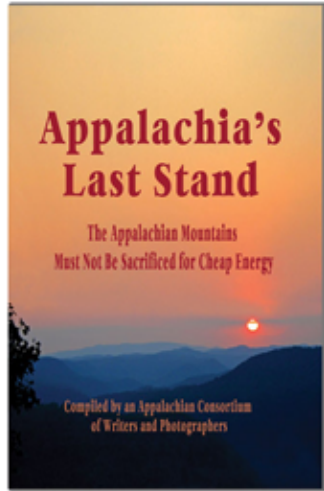
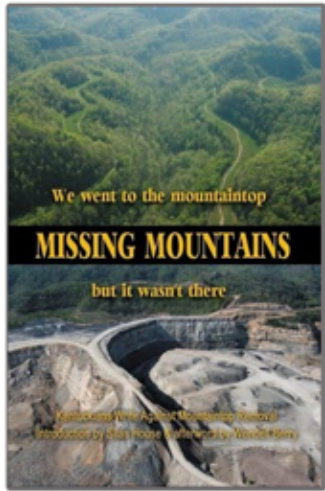


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Happy Birthday, KFTC!



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The CBD works through science, law and creative media to secure a future for all species, great or small.

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Congratulations KFTC  
for 30 years of advocacy and  
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Congratulations,  
Kentuckians For The Commonwealth  
on 30 great years!



From your friends in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Oregon, Idaho, North Dakota and South Dakota, who together with you are fighting for economic, social and environmental justice.



## Appalachian Transition Initiative

KFTC members have known for a long time that we have to prepare for a future beyond coal – and that diversifying our economy promises tremendous economic benefits as well as health benefits and protection for our land and water. With our partner MACED (Mountain Association for Community Economic Development), we launched the Appalachian Transition Initiative in 2009 to foster a conversation throughout our region about the need and opportunity for transition. Both the Renew East Kentucky plan and the sustainable energy policy work contribute to this vision by opening the door for new jobs in clean industries and – perhaps even more important – proving that coal is not the only game in town.

While the ATI vision is not limited to jobs in clean energy, it does emphasize jobs that respect local resources – such as sustainable agriculture and small-scale forestry. Our second Growing Appalachia conference in April 2011, hosted in Prestonsburg by the Floyd County chapter, was a day of workshops by local experts on ways to save and

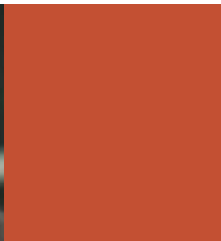
earn money through small-scale farming, forestry and energy solutions. The event attracted twice the number of people who attended in 2010. A major piece of our transition work in 2011 includes interviewing about 100 eastern Kentucky people including miners and their families about their values, hopes and fears for the region. This information will inform our work over the next few years to develop a common vision for economic development in Appalachia.

Through Renew East Kentucky, sustainable energy policy and the Appalachian Transition Initiative, we have the opportunity to translate our Canary work into real and meaningful changes for our region. While maintaining our emphasis on grassroots organizing and leadership development, we're interfacing with new partners and stakeholders to create sound plans and a strong network of support for a vision that can benefit

all of Kentucky. This work will use the power and momentum KFTC has built over the past 30 years to break the coal industry's grip on the state and public officials and create real and lasting opportunities for ordinary people to prosper.



# Happy 30th Birthday KFTC!



**We are proud to count you among our member groups!**



**The Alliance for Appalachia**

[www.theallianceforappalachia.org](http://www.theallianceforappalachia.org)

*“Being a KFTC member has changed me into being much more active in my community and state. I have gained a lot more skills. My voice is being heard a lot more now than it ever was in the local community and statewide.*

*When people come together and work on issues their energy, enthusiasm and impact is greatly multiplied; it’s like the Richter scale for judging the power of earthquakes; each increase in number increases the power by 10 times. It’s been proven repeatedly in human history, American history and KFTC history that there is power for social change in numbers. The greater the number the faster the social change.*

*The more people you get involved — people whose voices are not being heard in the political process — the more effective you are in the long term beyond just winning particular issues.*

*It’s all about empowering people.*

*Being a KFTC member will give you the opportunity to improve the knowledge and skills necessary for you to become more effective at accomplishing improvements in your community.*

*If people want to have an impact, if they want to be involved in the problems they see rather than just complaining about them, then KFTC is the way to go about it.*

*KFTC’s greatest strength lies in its ability to give people whose voices are rarely heard leadership skills, and then provides them with many opportunities to apply those skills both within KFTC and their community*

*KFTC puts you in contact with other people and there’s a multiplier effect of gaining knowledge from people who are making a change in the state who you meet by being a KFTC member.”*



**Doug Doerrfeld**  
KFTC chair, 2006-08



**Saving Kentucky** is about preserving not only land and historic property, but also a way of life. It tells the stories of an eclectic group of Kentuckians – including KFTC member Daymon Morgan – both in their own words and through the extraordinary photographs of Thomas Hart Shelby. From tenant farmers to urban revivalists, they have one thing in common: a deep connection to their heritage and a fierce determination to preserve it for future generations.

In these pages you will meet families who see, with uncommon clarity, the human value of the land. You will meet leaders, innovators and visionaries—people who are thinking about forever, not just tomorrow.

Sally Van Winkle Campbell has traveled Kentucky, driving the roads of the Bluegrass, seeing first-hand the majesty, as well as the heartbreak of the eastern Appalachian Mountains, and witnessing the renewal of the commonwealth’s urban centers.

More than a warning, it is an invitation – a call to each of us to embrace the future with hope and, most of all, imagination, even as we hold tight to the past.



**Daymon Morgan**

Pick up a copy at a local independent bookstore or order online at: [www.savingkentucky.com](http://www.savingkentucky.com)

*A portion of the proceeds from this book will support the work of KFTC to save the mountains and heritage of Eastern Kentucky from mountaintop removal and valley fills.*

# Environmental Justice

**E**nvironmental Justice issues have always been at the forefront of KFTC's work. Members have a long history of work on industrial agriculture, forestry, hazardous and solid waste, oil and gas drilling, and other local environmental justice issues. Some of these are still with us today.



## Hazardous and Solid Waste

In 1984, KFTC members in Lawrence County called upon the organization to take up the hazardous waste issue. They were working to keep a proposed hazardous waste incinerator out of their community. Members in Morgan County also were fighting a proposed hazardous waste incinerator. Jefferson County became a similar target soon thereafter.

Local organizing efforts included educating the public and winning the support of local officials, exposing the background of the incinerator owners, opposing air and water pollution permits, and pushing for alternatives. The Lawrence County Concerned Citizens produced volumes of research showing the mismanagement of hazardous waste at other sites by the principals involved in PyroChem, the company that had targeted their community. In 1985, citizens pushed through a local hazardous waste ordinance in Martin County, followed by similar wins in Lawrence County in 1986 and Jefferson County in 1988.

Also in 1985, KFTC hosted a Toxics Organizing Conference to gather residents from around the state working on a variety of toxic waste issues. This conference and one the following year led to the formation of KFTC's Toxic Committee, later renamed the Environmental Rights Committee. This work allowed KFTC to establish some strong relationships with members in western Kentucky.

While organizing on the local level, KFTC also addressed the issue on the statewide level. After legislative wranglings killed our bill in 1986, we succeeded in winning passage of a hazardous waste "local control" bill in the 1988 General Assembly. This gave communities the right to control the siting of hazardous waste facilities. Two months later, the Lawrence County Fiscal Court agreed to the demands of the local chapter and became the first county to use this new law to block the proposed PyroChem incinerator.



In 1989, KFTC members held a funeral for the state of Kentucky. Cause of death: "destruction from careless waste disposal." The action included a funeral procession through Frankfort (with police escort and hearse) and "graveside services" outside the Capitol.

Local efforts to stop unwanted hazardous waste facilities occurred at other times in KFTC's history, including a successful effort in 2000 by the Union County chapter to block a controversial plant that would remove PCBs from used equipment, while paying workers much less than a living wage.

None of the other hazardous waste incinerators KFTC members opposed were ever built. In Floyd County members also used the 1988 hazardous waste local control law in getting a medical waste incinerator at a local hospital, that often left a coating of ash on nearby homes, shut down after a multi-year campaign.

Landfills and solid waste disposal also were early issues for KFTC members. Even before KFTC

formed, residents in Pulaski County were trying to protect their water from a problematic and improperly permitted landfill. KFTC offered some help, and soon there was a chapter in Pulaski County. Fleming County residents found arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury and other heavy metals in groundwater near a landfill that had illegally accepted toxic wastes in the 1970s. The landfill owner sued citizens when they made this public, KFTC helped provide legal defense, and this led to a new chapter in Fleming County. The Roe Creek Landfill in Lawrence County was cited for air quality violations for the improper handling of asbestos and its permit revoked as a result of an investigation by KFTC members.




Work on solid waste management took on a whole new dimension in the late 1980s. Because of Kentucky's lax landfill standards and low disposal fees, the state became a target for the siting of large landfills built primarily to accept massive quantities of out-of-state waste. Residents did not want to multiply exponentially the problems that already existed while adding new ones, like hundreds of tractor-trailers on the narrow rural roads that led to most of these landfills.

Again, KFTC supported the local organizing to create public awareness and pressure on local and state officials, challenge permits, win water replacement or other compensation for

*KFTC members helped win the passage of legislation in 1988 that established Kentucky Partners, later renamed the Kentucky Pollution Prevention Center, housed at the University of Louisville. KFTC was given a seat on the board. The program researched and promoted waste reduction, and today is involved in promoting environmental sustainability.*

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featuring

## Julia Butterfly Hill



Activist Julia Butterfly Hill is the author of *The Legacy of Luna: The Story of a Tree, a woman and the Struggle to Save the Redwoods*



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damaged homes – and used this as a base for bringing about change on the state level.

Victory came relatively quickly, when in 1990 state officials strengthened landfill design standards, making them some of the best in the country at the time. Then in a special legislative session in 1991, KFTC helped win passage of another “local control” bill, this time giving counties more authority and responsibility over solid waste management and disposal. These new laws gave KFTC members the tools needed to stem the flow of out-of-state garbage.

Chapters formed in Henry, Trimble, Greenup, Whitley, Pulaski and Fleming counties primarily around local landfill issues, and in Morgan and Lawrence counties primarily around hazardous waste issues. With the exception of Lawrence and Whitley counties (which became part of a Tri-County chapter with Knox and Laurel counties for a short time), none of these groups remained a KFTC chapter for very long. Although many individuals remained members and some became statewide leaders, without a local focus the energy for working as a chapter died.

### Oil and Gas Drilling

KFTC’s first encounters with problems from oil and gas drilling had to do with its contamination of surface and ground water. Soon thereafter, surface owners’ rights also became an issue.

An oil and gas drilling boom that started in 1981 (brought about by a new federal law that created a tax shelter for domestic oil exploration) resulted in hundreds of families seeing their drinking water wells contaminated from a drilling process known as “fracking.” This involved pumping a liquid concoction into the bore hole at high pressure in order to fracture the rock strata and allow the oil to flow more easily. This fracking liquid also contaminated ground water and the wells many rural Kentuckians relied on for household use.



Janet Brown and GROWL (Greenup Residents Opposing Waste Landfill) members took a clear message about out-of-state waste to the state capitol. In 1987, they learned their fiscal court had approved a 937-acre landfill, with almost all the waste coming from out of state. GROWL formed, and with KFTC assistance worked for years with a variety of strategies to protect their community. They were mostly successful, not keeping the landfill out all together but winning reasonable limitations on the size and service area of the landfill.

**Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday, KFTC!**

*It's been a pleasure navigating the future of Kentucky's waterways together over the years. Here's to many more!*



NAVIGATING THE FUTURE OF KENTUCKY'S WATERWAYS

Kentucky  Waterways Alliance   
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These drilling liquids, along with brine that occurred deep underground and entered the bore hole, were dumped indiscriminately on the land and in streams. So much brine was produced during this boom that a water testing project in Magoffin County, where a new chapter had formed, found some streams to be 13 times saltier than ocean water. There was so much brine in the Licking River coming from Magoffin County that several towns downstream, including West Liberty in Morgan County, could no longer adequately treat their public water supply. A dangerous carcinogen was found in the city’s water.

Both state and federal environmental officials admitted that the brine discharges violated water quality laws, but neither took any enforcement action.

Again, local organizing efforts attacked the issue on multiple fronts. A public hearing in Magoffin County with state officials brought out so much citizen outrage that a few days later Gov. John Y. Brown declared a state of emergency there. That made it easier for the county to receive public financing to extend water lines to some affected residents. The governor’s

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Letcher County chapter members have a long history of dealing with the abuses of oil and gas drilling companies, including in 1990 when Equitable Resources wanted to drill without the consent of the surface owner. Residents protested by blocking the road and were put under a court restraining order. Letcher residents currently are dealing with the loss of water wells due to drilling operations.

The bill met widespread opposition from the oil and gas industry. Despite that, it passed the House before being killed by Senate leaders. Used to that scenario, KFTC organized throughout the coalfields of Kentucky (including a short-lived chapter in Clinton County). Letcher County members pushed for a local ordinance to control destructive drilling practices.

It took several legislative sessions, but perseverance paid off. KFTC's oil and gas surface owners' rights bill became law in 1994.

Problems with oil and gas drilling have not gone away over the years, but these laws gave residents better tools for protecting their land and water. However, a new push for domestic drilling for natural gas has again made fracking a national issue as new areas where gas might be found are explored, and the frequency of problems in Kentucky is again on the rise. The Letcher County KFTC Chapter is currently working to create more public awareness of this renewed threat to water quality.

## Sustainable Forestry

Working to protect Kentucky forests also has been a long-time priority for KFTC members. A couple of events drew KFTC into this issue. The first was an increase in logging as timber companies eyed the central Appalachian hardwoods after depleting forests in other parts of the country. The second involved proposals to build chip mills and similar wood-processing plants with huge appetites for logs, including trees just a few inches in diameter. This encouraged clear-cutting of the forests.

There were few environmental controls on logging at the time. Logging roads would crisscross property and there were no laws controlling erosion or requiring reclamation of damaged land. Some loggers would operate their equipment right in the middle of streams.

State officials lured one of these wood-processing plants to Perry County with \$120 million in subsidies and tax breaks – more than \$1 million per job created. The two companies involved had questionable backgrounds, related to both their environmental performance and the exposure of workers to toxic chemicals.

KFTC promoted a long-term vision for sustainable forestry. We wanted:

- controls on logging that would protect the integrity, diversity and long-term health of the forest;

order also directed environmental officials to develop new rules to control the illegal pollution.

Those rules brought another round of outrage. State officials proposed applying controls on oil and gas well discharges based on the "rate of profit" for the company, allowing many of the worst offenders to remain exempt. With the cooperation of a bank in Morgan County, KFTC helped generate more than 1,300 letters challenging the state's proposal. That effort was successful, and more reasonable controls were put in place.

KFTC also helped some landowners in Leslie County stop an oil company from drilling on their property without permission. That led to the development of a surface owners' rights bill that was first introduced in the 1986 General Assembly.



When Carl Bradley, secretary of the Kentucky Natural Resources Cabinet, refused to meet with KFTC members about a variety of concerns, they created a “Wanted Poster” featuring Bradley’s picture. The poster described how Bradley was wanted for failing to do his job and enforce environmental laws. The members hung the posters up all over Frankfort. The action worked. A meeting with Bradley happened a short time later.

- education of land/timber owners as to the value of their holdings and management of forests for long-term sustainable return; and
- development of forest products industries “with locally based economically and ecologically sound programs that provide long-term quality jobs in a sustainable environment.”

As with other issues, the work of KFTC and other groups brought the issue into public awareness, where it took on a life of its own. KFTC pushed unsuccessfully for a Forest Conservation Act in the 1996 legislative session. The bill was defeated, but two years later Gov. Paul Patton presented forestry legislation that was very similar to, though weaker than, KFTC’s proposal. It required loggers to use best management practices and to receive safety training. KFTC also got a seat on the Best Management Practices Review Committee to monitor logging techniques and recommend changes in standards.

Another big part of KFTC’s forestry work dealt with the proper management of the Daniel Boone National Forest. Large portions of Leslie, Laurel and Rowan counties, where KFTC has had chapters, are part of the national forest. Chapter members have challenged and changed some of the U.S. Forest Service management practices related to the use of pesticides, access to family cemeteries landlocked by USFS land, and off-road vehicle use. We

*“My years as chairperson were some of the busiest with a lot of different issues such as recycling, solid waste disposal, out-of-state garbage, hazardous waste incinerators,*

### **Patty Wallace**

*KFTC chair, 1988-90*



*signing of SB 169 [local control] and getting the unmined minerals tax negotiated.*

*Then there was Lawrence County’s routing of PyroChem. It took us 7 years but we showed what can happen when citizens fight for the right thing. It was great the night our magistrates came into the courtroom, conducted a hear-*

*ing and voted PyroChem’s proposal down. When PyroChem surfaced over in West Virginia in a few days, we took all our info to those residents and they nipped it in the bud.*

*Those years and others have led to some of KFTC’s most impressive accomplishments. Because of our hard work and victories we have earned a great reputation and have connections all over the country.*

*I hope our group continues to grow. Being a member has been a growing experience for me.*

*I have met the nicest people through these years, many of them well-known and many who should be well known because of their good sense, their love of the land and their willingness to stand up and fight for it. And ... we always had fun.*

*Thanks to KFTC our voices will be heard. We have learned that we can make a difference.”*



challenged clear-cutting practices, and supported Heartwood in legal action that stopped commercial logging in the forest. Laurel and Leslie residents fought against the forest service for years before finally resolving boundary disputes.

In 2000, KFTC members were among those who successfully challenged a USFS plan to lease coal under the forest for mining. In 2001, members in Laurel County questioned a proposed forest service land swap that would have traded public land to a coal company so it could strip mine it. And they also got transportation planners to change the proposed route of a new interstate highway that would have affected a unique ecological area of the forest.

Rowan County chapter members have been successful on several occasions in recent years at protecting national forest land. They stopped proposals to ruin pristine areas of the national forest with new interstate exchanges and access roads, and another plan for high-voltage power lines.

## Industrial Agriculture

In 1997, as new chapters in Hopkins and Union counties were in their early stages, western Kentucky became a favorite target for large-scale animal feeding operations (factory farms). One proposal would have put a 500,000 hog breeding facility in a rural residential area of Hopkins County.

At that time, Kentucky had no laws governing the siting, waste disposal, air quality or environmental liabilities of such large-scale operations. Using a strategy that had worked well on other issues, members worked to keep out individual factory farms on the local level while building support for the adoption of health and safety laws on the state level.



Hopkins County chapter members were successful in keeping large-scale factory farms, with weak environmental controls, out of their community.

Hopkins County members did win their local battle. They also led KFTC's work on the state level, and in late 1997 the Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet issued emergency regulations to protect communities hosting large-scale confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). That was hardly the end of the battle, though. The 1998 General Assembly vetoed the emergency regulations, and blocked the adoption of permanent rules. Yet lawmakers failed to enact their own law governing these operations after KFTC and other groups stopped weak legislation supported by corporate agriculture. This forced the cabinet to again issue emergency regulations that eventually would become permanent.

But for a second time, and then a third time, the scenario was repeated, and lawmakers blocked those emergency regulations while failing to take action to protect the public.

The issue was never satisfactorily resolved by the Kentucky General Assembly. However, in 2001 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency stepped in and began a decade-long process of developing and revising some controls on CAFOs, using the Clean Water Act to limit effluent discharges (rules that were still being litigated in 2011). State officials were obligated to adopt these same rules for Kentucky.

None of the individual CAFOs opposed by KFTC chapters were ever built.



*“When I was chairperson, one of the greatest things that we looked at was racism within our own organization. We did lots of workshops on racism. I think it was very necessary and it really brought us together much more so as an organization because we would address it from within and say, “We’re all capable of racism.” I was probably the most proud of KFTC to go through that process, because it was very difficult.*

*We had lots of working groups and workshops that asked tough questions about skin color, sexual preferences and socio-economic questions. We looked at all the ‘isms’ that there are and we looked at a lot of hard facts about socio-economic standings and how much racism there is in the environmental world. People were able to talk about their feelings about racism and reverse racism and backlash from the Civil Rights Movement. It delved into issues that most of us came to the table not thinking we were ever going to touch. We lost some members through the process, but we gained a lot more.*

*The diversity in KFTC and the care and love that the members have for other issues besides their own is what makes KFTC such a powerful force.*

*The problems feel overwhelming and that’s why you have to be with a group like KFTC. We celebrate not just the wins, but the defeats too, because it’s not a defeat forever. You learn what you have to do next time. You start to figure out more pieces of the puzzle. We’re bucking a system that’s powerful and controlled.”*

**Jane Harrod**  
KFTC chair, 1995-97



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# Economic Justice

*Economic Justice issues have been at the heart of KFTC's work from our earliest days. For KFTC's first decade, this work was largely related to the focus on coal and land ownership issues. That expanded as chapters began working on local economic justice concerns. In 1991, KFTC members adopted a strategic plan calling for the organization to diversify our membership and focus more on economic issues affecting low-income Kentuckians. Today, members continue to address a broad range of economic justice issues, with tax reform still at the top of the list.*

## Tax Reform

KFTC's very first issue campaign was tax reform, to require coal companies and wealthy mineral owners to pay their fair share in property taxes. Until that time, coal companies paid virtually no taxes on their unmined coal properties worth billions of dollars, and their land and other real property holdings were grossly under-assessed. As a result, schools and local government programs in eastern Kentucky were denied much-needed local revenues to maintain a basic level of services taken for granted in other parts of the state.

The 2005 General Assembly brought an important win for Kentucky's lower-income families when lawmakers approved one of our high-priority bills. It made the tax system a little fairer by removing those living in poverty from the state income tax. Up until then, individuals started paying tax on only \$5,500 in annual income, the second lowest threshold in the nation. With the new law, income taxes start when an individual or family exceeds poverty-level income.

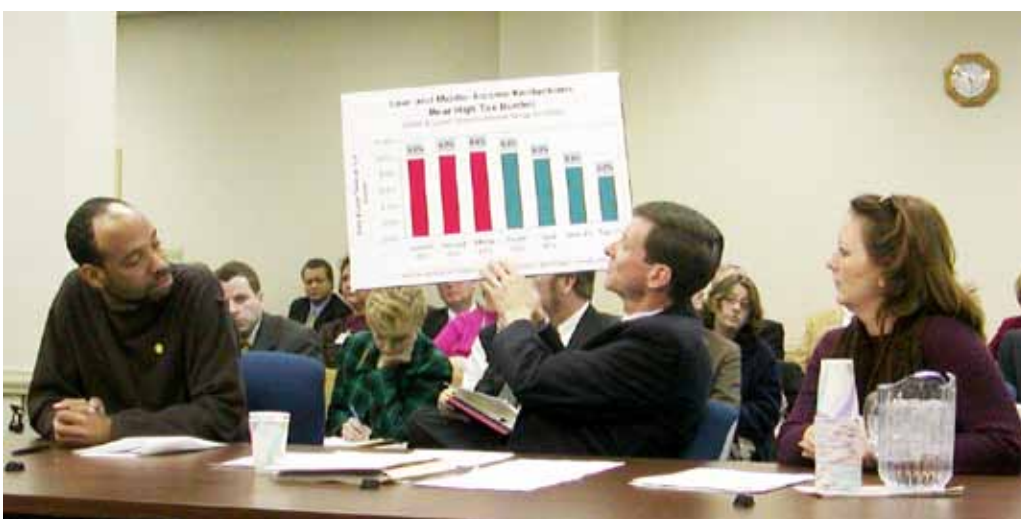
Ultimately we were successful in righting these injustices. Beginning in 1987 Kentucky has taxed unmined coal property at its fair market value, bringing in about \$10 million a year to eastern Kentucky school districts. And though we were not successful in winning legislation to allow third-party assessment appeals, the awareness that this work raised resulted in increased assessments by property valuation administrators.

The unmined minerals tax victory did not come easily. To build support, we placed a lot of emphasis on getting endorsements for unmined minerals tax legislation. We got dozens, ranging from unions, education groups, civic and church organizations and newspapers. By 1983, we had created so much public attention on this issue that Gov. John Y. Brown appointed an Unmined Minerals Tax Advisory Commission to study the issue. The coal industry formed its own special committee to oppose this proposal.

We did not win this issue legislatively, however. The bills we supported would get approved in committee and then be killed by House

leaders. In the meantime, KFTC had filed a lawsuit challenging the minerals tax exemption as unconstitutional. We won this case in lower court, and in 1988 the Kentucky Supreme Court affirmed KFTC's victory.

This was not the end of the issue, though. KFTC was involved in litigation against the Kentucky Revenue Cabinet for nearly 20 years – until 2005 – to get the cabinet to properly assess and collect the tax.



KFTC members K.A. Owens and Teri Blanton joined Rep. Jim Wayne to give testimony in support of tax reform proposals during the 2004 General Assembly. The chart shows the imbalance in the amount of state income tax paid for various income levels.

And in almost every legislative session until recently, KFTC defended the unmined minerals tax victory from attempts to reinstate the exemption.

For the past decade or so, our tax reform efforts have focused on larger tax and revenue matters. Working with the Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance and more recently with the Kentucky Forward Coalition, KFTC members have pushed for reforms in the tax code to raise adequate revenue to support the kind of society Kentuckians want and deserve, and to counter the decade of program cuts for education, environmental protection and other essential services.

Proposals developed and supported by the

Forward Coalition would raise hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenue, while also adding fairness to the tax system. Currently, in Kentucky, lower income families contribute disproportionately more of their income for state and local taxes than do the wealthy. KFTC's Tax Reform work represents one of our current major statewide campaigns, and the Kentucky Forward bill is the only proposal on the table that would bring about progressive tax reform.

KFTC members also have been drawn into recent debates over the federal budget, as various funding plans are designed to prevent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from enforcing the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act.

## Janet Tucker

*KFTC chair, 2004-06*



*"KFTC's presence was seen, heard and listened to with respect in the 2005 General Assembly. For the first time in decades, individuals and families earning at or below the poverty level will be exempt from state income tax. A horrible bill that would have allowed more overloaded trucks on our roads was defeated. And a bill to stop the dumping of mine wastes into streams as a way to curb mountaintop removal was introduced for the first time.*

*I'm proud because I know KFTC had a significant part in each of these legislative outcomes.*

*The tax reform proposal that we developed with our partners in the Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance was seen as the alternative to the governor's plan, a plan that failed to address the state's budget crisis and traded tax cuts to corporations for an increase in the cigarette and other consumer taxes. More than one legislator thanked us for our courage in offering a bold plan that is right for Kentucky.*

*We researched and collected an impressive array of information that we compiled into a Tax Reform Primer. We initially gave this to members of the House Appropriations & Revenue Committee on a Thursday morning and later in the day were told that it had sparked some thoughtful discussions among legislators. We were asked to supply all 100 members of the House with this packet, and eventually gave one to the 37 members of the Senate and the media as well.*

*What is most impressive to me about all this activity is the energy and dedication of KFTC members. It really does make me proud to be associated with people who care so deeply about other people and their community and state."*



# Advocacy Action Network

*Kentucky Mental Health Coalition    Kentucky Medicaid Consortium  
Kentuckians for Health Care Reform    United 874K Disabilities Coalition*

**Congratulations to our friends and advocacy partners  
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## Utilities

KFTC's first involvement around low-income utility issues came in 1986. Members supported a successful effort by the Concerned Citizens of Martin County to win a Public Service Commission ruling barring Kentucky Power Company (a subsidiary of American Electric Power) from charging its eastern Kentucky customers for the construction of a new coal-burning power plant in Indiana, built by another AEP subsidiary.

KFTC got much more deeply involved in these issues in 1988, led by POWER (People Organized and Working for Utility Reform), a Jefferson County group closely affiliated with our chapter there. POWER formed as an outgrowth of community resistance to a \$21.9 million rate hike proposed by Louisville Gas & Electric.

Before the rate hike, many families were already struggling with high utility costs. POWER's work grew out of the problem of low-income households having their utilities shut off – sometimes even in the middle of winter – due to the inability to pay their bills. The loss of utilities actually led to the death of some children when a fire destroyed the home of a family using candles for light.

POWER's goal was to establish a home heating assistance program with a permanent and adequate source of funding. While some such programs did exist, they were subject to annual budget fluctuations and political whims, and often ran out of money in the middle of winter when assistance was most needed.

Through the years, POWER with the Jefferson County chapter and a coalition of consumer and low-income



**POWER members held many press conferences and other actions in Louisville to draw attention to the problem of utility shutoffs and to advocate for funding mechanisms to provide permanent support for utility assistance programs.**

### **Sister Marie Gangwish**

*KFTC chairperson, 1997-98*

*"I've been a KFTC member since pretty close to the beginning. I was interested in strip mining and the coal injustices going on. There's always been some issue.*

*I was very displeased with the president for signing the welfare changes. The state is putting their welfare program together in a hurry and it sure does not value the human person, nor does it agree with KFTC values. There was no thought of what all this new regulation is going to do to people. They're not considering the whole picture at all. I believe the powerful people making decisions behind the scenes want people to remain in subjection. They don't want people to get out of poverty.*

*I really believe in what KFTC does for folks. The thread that holds everyone together is justice on the grassroots level. Justice tempered with respect for life, respect for people. I find that in KFTC. I sure do."*



Sister Marie died in August 2004. This is from a 1997 interview.

advocacy groups, won various programs to assist with utility payments, promote energy conservation and support home weatherization. The problem of untimely shutoffs was curtailed. But funding was still a problem until 2001, when the coalition pushed for and won legislation allowing utilities to establish *universal service funds* to provide a permanent source of funding for these programs.

### Welfare and Economic Development

In the early 1990s, the concerns of KFTC members became focused on Kentucky's economic development programs. State officials were actually recruiting extractive, polluting industries that often did not provide workers with living wage jobs and actually hurt local small businesses. This effort ran counter to KFTC work on other issues, such as protecting water and land resources and using our natural resources prudently.

An example was the Trus Joist MacMillan wood products plant lured to Perry County with more than \$110 million in tax breaks and incentives (more than \$1 million per job). TJM's presence encouraged the clear-cutting of forests (for which there were no environmental controls at the time), exposed workers to hazardous chemicals, and threatened the livelihood of local loggers and sawmill owners.

In 1996, Congress passed sweeping changes in public assistance programs, eliminating support for many families and forcing recipients to find jobs that didn't exist or didn't allow workers to live above the poverty level. People were actually being punished for the failure of the private sector and the state's economic development programs to provide decent jobs for all Kentucky residents.





*Here's to 30 more years of*

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# Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

to  
**Kentuckians  
For The Commonwealth**

The Kentucky Domestic Violence Association's Economic Justice Team wishes KFTC continued success for the next 30 years!



**KENTUCKY YOUTH ADVOCATES**



the independent voice for Kentucky's children [www.kyyouth.org](http://www.kyyouth.org)

With many low-income members, as well as with chapters in the poorer areas of the state, it was natural for KFTC to be drawn into debates about welfare reform in the mid-1990s. But even before then, KFTC members contended that the problem was poverty, not welfare programs. KFTC advocated for solutions that addressed the root causes of poverty – such as jobs with decent pay and benefits, and control of local resources – not programs that only tried to eliminate the symptoms of poverty or attacked those who were poor.

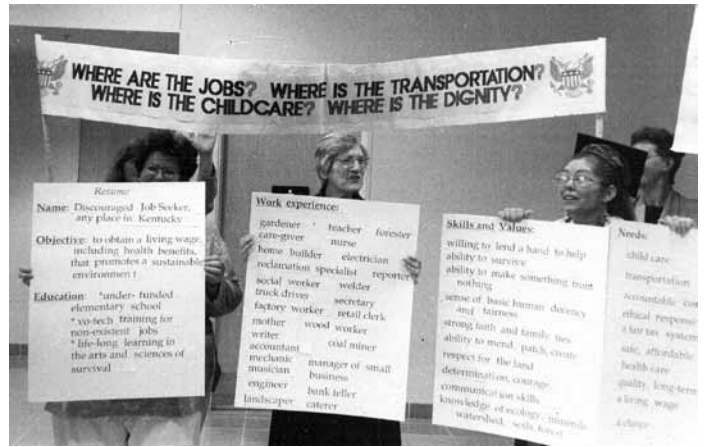
KFTC had already started working with low-income students, primarily single moms, at community colleges to oppose proposed federal welfare policies to make it more difficult for welfare recipients to obtain the education needed to earn a living wage. Unfortunately, the 1996 law put those policies into law, creating new barriers to low-income parents from getting the education and training they sought.

In 1996, KFTC formed the Welfare, Economic Development and Justice Committee (WEDJ) made up of mostly low-income members from eastern Kentucky, Louisville, Lexington and western Kentucky. The WEDJ Committee developed KFTC’s statewide strategy on welfare and other economic justice issues.

After a series of discussions and forums with affected people, KFTC with the Kentucky Welfare Reform Coalition and a coalition of other groups determined that restoring and improving educational opportunities for low-income students and welfare recipients would be a priority. This translated into support for the “Access to Education Act” in the 1998 General Assembly, which would increase support for low-income students pursuing a college-level degree. KFTC members provided the research, lobbied and testified in support of the bill.

A bill did pass. Unfortunately, it was watered down for fear of repercussions from the federal government since it loosened some of the restrictions in the 1996 law. An advisory board was appointed to examine the barriers to education faced by low-income Kentuckians and make policy recommendations.

KFTC got more of what we wanted in negotiations with the Cabinet for Families and Children. Under the



agreement, the cabinet made support services (child care and transportation) available to low-income parents in school, even if they were not receiving welfare assistance. The cabinet also agreed to work with schools to find required work assignments on campus consistent with a recipient’s education program and schedule.

Though this was a good victory, it was not enough. KFTC members kept pushing and the following year Gov. Paul Patton announced a number of new policies and programs to assist welfare recipients and people moving into new jobs. Among the changes, Kentucky would make it possible for recipients to attend college for two years

## CONGRATULATIONS AND BLESSINGS



We, the community of St. William, congratulate KFTC as you celebrate 30 years of justice-making for all of us “on the ground” here in Kentucky. May you continue to grow and make a difference in our community.

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before additional work requirements kicked in (enough time to at least get an associate's degree). This was just what KFTC had pushed for in the 1998 legislation.

While KFTC members realized that a better education was often the means to a better job with a living wage, they were concerned that such jobs were not available in many communities. Adding to this problem was the fact that state economic development programs generally produced few results in many rural areas and often used tax incentives to lure low-paying jobs with few benefits.

These concerns took KFTC members in a couple of different though related directions. In Lexington and Louisville, members became involved in local Living Wage Campaigns. Central Kentucky members also supported Lexington solid waste workers in their quest for better pay and recognition of the hazardous nature of their occupation.

In 1997, KFTC, the Kentucky Youth Advocates, Appalshop, Democracy Resource Center and Community Farm Alliance created the Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance to advance policies affecting low income Kentuckians. KEJA worked to create awareness of the huge tax incentives packages used to lure businesses to the state and the shortcomings of this practice, which often included subsidized jobs that paid less than poverty wages, provided few or no benefits, did not raise the standard of living in the host community and sometimes even lowered it by creating stress on local infrastructure or depleting resources.

KEJA and a broad coalition of labor, faith and citizens' groups offered legislation in the 2000 General Assembly to require companies to pay a living wage, offer benefits, and have good environmental, worker safety and fair employment records before they could receive tax subsidies. The bill received a hearing in the House Economic Development Committee and was subject to an all-out assault by the state's economic development power brokers. But an unexpected number of legislators from rural areas were sympathetic to the bill because of their own dissatisfaction with the state's economic development efforts.

As with other issues, some results were achieved even without the passage of legislation. State economic development officials began paying more attention, and increased media scrutiny is helping to hold them accountable.

KFTC economic development work in the past few years has been done largely with the Mountain Association for Economic Development (MACED) and our collaborative High Road Initiative. That work has grown into what we now call the Appalachian Transition Initiative ([www.appalachiantransition.org](http://www.appalachiantransition.org)) and focuses on being a resource for the coming transition of our economy, work force and communities to a more just, sustainable and prosperous future.

## Immigration

Several times in recent years, KFTC members have been drawn into public debates about immigration policies and the rights of immigrants. Our efforts have been largely to support immigrant communities and involve ourselves in efforts promoting just immigration reform while helping to defeat proposals to punish immigrants without required documentation. Members were active in the successful campaign to defeat an Arizona-style anti-immigrant copycat bill proposed in the 2011 General Assembly.

## Lamar Keys

*KFTC chair, 2000-02*



*"One of the things that impresses me is persistence. If KFTC wants an issue to come up and they think the issue is not healthy for the citizens of Kentucky they will step in and take an active part in correcting that issue. They will get their message out and reach out across boundaries, whether it be racial, political or whatever. KFTC is not afraid to cross those boundaries.*

*KFTC has taught me a lot, broadened my way of thinking and the way I see things over the past years. Some of the things that we worked on, like dismantling racism, it was helpful. Sometimes our government plays that race card against certain people to keep them apart, and as long as we are fighting each other we can't stand together.*

*KFTC's work is important – it goes back to the Declaration of Independence, [that] all people are created equal, should be represented equally and treated equally.*

*KFTC is always willing to jump into an issue and learn about it and diagnose it. They're just right for the people."*

Thanks KFTC for  
being a citizens'  
voice for justice in the  
General Assembly

**Debbie and  
Rep. Jim Wayne**

*Congratulations  
on 30 years!*

**Thanks KFTC for  
your dedication  
to the long haul!**



*"The future is out there,  
ready to be changed. You  
must be creative, imaginative,  
and courageously dedicated  
for the long haul."*

**Myles Horton, 1982**

**Congratulations**  
on three decades  
of action for justice!



# Voter Empowerment

Voter empowerment has been a cornerstone of KFTC's organizing since our beginning. Our voter work focuses not on a single election but on an ongoing effort to educate voters on issues, engage them in the political process, get them to the polls on Election Day, and ultimately build a more representative democracy with more progressive political leadership.

Our initial voter work was reflective of our focus on local organizing. Chapters were involved in voter registration efforts and many held candidate forums as local elections, especially legislative races, rolled around. These activities continue today across the state and help educate voters about candidates' positions and help hold elected officials accountable. Two products developed over the years, KFTC's Voting Guide and more recently the kentuckyelection.org website, provided written responses from candidates to questionnaires from KFTC and other essential voting information.

In late 2003 and into 2004, Central Kentucky members led the way in deepening KFTC's involvement in voter empowerment. They knew the importance of the upcoming 2004 elections that included presidential, congressional, legislative and local races. But they were particularly interested in a local referendum for a slight increase in property taxes, with the new revenue dedicated to support public transportation. At that time, LexTran, the local bus system, was in bad shape financially and had recently cut back its service, creating a hardship for many people and even some employers when their workers had a harder time getting to work.

Coordinating with the Central Kentucky Council on Peace and Justice on a "Central Kentucky Voter 2004" campaign, chapter members helped register almost 2,000 voters, passed out thousands of mail-in voter registration cards and brochures, and held close to 90 different events. This on-the-ground work was followed up with two mailings to the people we registered and a call to remind them to vote. On Election Day, members gave rides to the polls and worked to remove other possible barriers to voting.

The Central Kentucky chapter not only won the LexTran vote they had put the most effort into, they also were buoyed by other results. Locally, voter turnout increased by 5 percent from the last presidential election year. But in the 10 precincts on the north side of Lexington – predominantly low-income people and people of color areas targeted by voter registration drives – voter registration was up 11 percent!



Getting out the vote in Bowling Green.



*"The work KFTC is doing as an organization on voter empowerment is some of the best work around. We should keep it going. We reach out to new voters based on issues; we follow through from registering voters to Election Day. And now we need to keep them involved beyond Election Day. It's true empowerment."*


**Antonio Mazzaro**  
Northern Kentucky Chapter

That was a good lesson in what was possible with focused voter empowerment work, with voter turnout results that KFTC has been able to replicate in elections since. Most recently, in the 2010 elections, we did more strategic targeted voter outreach using, for the first time, a voter activation network database. We invested in additional outreach capacity by hiring short-time voter empowerment organizers with the support of the Pushback Network, a national network of groups like KFTC committed to changing the composition and levels of participation

of the electorate. Between one-on-one conversations, tabling at events, phone calls and mailings, we reached 150,000 voters in key districts.

In 2010, KFTC's leadership also formed a new organization to play a more visible and assertive role in Kentucky elections. The New Power PAC conducted an ambitious voter empowerment and communications campaign leading up to the November 2010 election that included extensive contact with voters across Kentucky, a major media campaign, a new website (www.new-powerky.org), the New Power Pledge, a youth forum, and more.

While getting voters to the polls has always been a goal, we focus more on building relationships by talking about issues, helping voters to see themselves in those issues, and empowering them to hold candidates accountable on those issues. When these relationships succeed, voters go to the polls because they feel ownership of the issues and the electoral process. And they become life-long voters and active participants in their democracy.



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including raising public awareness of the fact that the University of Kentucky burns approximately 40,000 tons of coal annually to heat its Lexington Campus

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## Restoration of Voting Rights Campaign

As KFTC members were going door-to-door during the LexTran campaign, working community festivals and engaging in other voter registration efforts, they heard time after time, "I wish I could vote but I'm not allowed." Members learned that Kentucky has one of the most restrictive processes for restoring the voting rights of felons who have completed their sentences. As a result, there are more than 125,000 Kentuckians, according to a League of Women Voters report, who are not allowed to vote because of a past mistake. Most have straightened out their life, work and pay taxes, and sometimes have served in the military or been ordained a minister.



The annual Voting Rights Rally in the capitol rotunda is an energetic and inspiring event.

essential leadership in the coalition. The "Singing for Democracy" events we've sponsored have raised a great amount of awareness of this issue with an energetic and values-based message.

In recent years, our primary strategy has been to get the General Assembly to place a proposed amendment on the statewide ballot to change the constitutional restrictions and provide automatic restoration of voting rights for most former felons. As part of that campaign we've collected tens of thousands of postcards directed at key legislative leaders asking for support of the needed legislation. An annual Voting Rights Rally has grown and provides one of the most energetic citizen lobby days during the annual legislative session.

The Kentucky House of Representatives has supported this change, passing the legislation by increasingly large margins over the last several legislative sessions. We've focused citizen lobbying efforts in the Senate, where a majority of senators have said they would support the bill. But Senators David Williams and Damon Thayer have used their leadership positions to keep the Voting Rights bill from receiving a vote.

### Lillian Holloway Fayette County



Lillian Holloway worked with KFTC for the restoration of voting rights for former felons until her death in October 2005. After several attempts Lillian was successful in getting her own voting rights restored. These comments about receiving her voting rights are from an interview in July 2005.

*"It feels good to be able to participate with not only political events but just to know that you have a say on what is going on in society. I did not care about voting or anything else until I found out that I could not do it. Voting is a privilege that was fought for years ago.*

*I would like to tell others that are no longer in the system to apply for their rights to be restored and become an active member in society. To me this is a great part of being accepted back into society. I am living proof that being accepted back into society makes a difference in your life."*



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**KFTC welcome to the dirty thirties, it’s the best decade, trust us! We look forward to empowering communities with you for another thirty!**

- Much Love the SWOP Familia



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JUSTICE WHERE WE WORK  
JUSTICE WHERE WE PLAY**

**SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT**

# New Power!



In 2004, KFTC held a leadership retreat and a series of follow-up meetings on the changing political landscape in Kentucky, the capacity of our organization, allies, and movement, and the implications of our findings. We decided then that we had to be bigger and work more strategically if we wanted to win on the issues we care about.

Over the next few years, through a collective organizational development and growth plan that we labeled Option A, we tripled our membership and quadrupled our annual grassroots fundraising.

The impact of the success of Option A has been profound. We have a wider and more energized membership, more influence with key decision-makers, more financial stability and options, a broader program of work, and more support from allies. And we have more confidence in the importance of our vision, and especially in our potential to achieve it.



**K.A. Owens**  
KFTC chair, 2008-10

*“Things look bad. Yet something beautiful and new is happening here. Our struggle in Appalachia and across Kentucky to end mountaintop removal mining and create a sustainable economy has become the struggle of millions of people across the nation. People in every corner are rising up to demand a new direction for our communities, our country and our planet.*

*KFTC believes that the wisdom of ordinary people is the only worthwhile base for our New Power Initiative that weaves together politics, economics and energy. Look to your left, look to your right. You’re the new power. We’re the new power.”*

In 2008, we renewed that assessment and planning in a yearlong leadership conversation. We discussed the convergence of crises (such as economic collapse or looming climate catastrophe) and opportunities (like new political leadership or the potential green jobs transformation) facing our nation. We took special note of the major issues moving to the forefront of the public discourse, such as energy policy and economic transition, that will have a major impact on shaping our communities and constituencies.

We recognized that our members have direct experience and valuable insight into these national issues and that they should be involved in the debate surrounding the issues. We decided to again refine our organizing model.



**KFTC used a press conference to announce the formation of the New Power PAC in September 2010.**

We launched the New Power Initiative to build the new power – new economic power, new energy power, and new political power – we need to restore our democracy, build healthy communities and help save the planet. The initiative is built on the premise that grassroots organizations and grassroots leaders can and should develop the analysis, solutions, and power to impact the public policy issues facing our nation and communities.

New Power is an antidote to the Old Power landscape in which politicians and the wealthy wield too much power over decisions affecting our economy, energy sources, and

environment. We're building new economic power so all Kentuckians have access to good jobs, good schools, health care, and a fair tax system. We're building new energy power by pressuring industries and decision-makers to emphasize renewable energy, respect the environment, and create new, safe jobs. And we're building new political power in which our government leaders represent the interests of all Kentuckians.

Through the New Power Initiative, we made three strategic commitments to ourselves.

First, we expanded our platform of active policy campaigns, but we are doing it in a way that allows us to strengthen, not fragment, our core base. We are weaving together our seemingly diverse issue campaigns to produce a stronger – and more beautiful – social justice fabric.

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Second, we are committed to grow. We won't pursue size at the expense of quality or integrity. But, when trying to make lasting social change, size matters, and we have to grow to achieve our goals. To help us grow, we launched the New Power Leader program in 2010.

These New Power Leaders are advanced spokespersons on KFTC issues, capable of mobilizing others, speaking publicly in their communities and beyond, and raising funds. New Power Leaders lead clusters of 5 to 50 people in their own communities. We recruited about 150 New Power Leaders in 2010 and expect to have 1,000 when the program is fully realized.

And third, to fulfill these two goals of issue expansion and organizational growth – and retain the essential character of our organization – we know we must innovate and elevate our core strategies. Most significant are revisions and additions to our leadership development, communications, and voter empowerment, with implications for everything from fundraising to staff team development.

The New Power Initiative has already enlarged our ways of thinking and presented new opportunities. For example, in 2010 we formed the New Power PAC to play a more visible and assertive role in Kentucky elections. Through the PAC, we conducted an ambitious voter empowerment and communications campaign around the 2010 elections.

*"If we are to overcome the legacy of old power and take full advantage of this moment, we need to build New Power.*

*New Power would mean a new economy designed to be fair and adequate to the needs of everyone. It will produce good jobs, support local communities by nurturing diverse local economies, underwrite just services, and be paid for with fair and adequate taxes.*

*New Power is new knowledge power. Emerging information technology driven by an inspiring new generation is changing the forms and functions of communication. We can educate ourselves and each other about issues, values, ideas, options, strategies and accomplishments to become informed, inclusive and inspired.*

*New Power is new political power that won't be achieved by waiting for new political leaders to show up. New political power means an informed, politically conscious, organized base of voters built*

*from the ground up. When we have tens of thousands of energized, organized voters we will also have more accountable, courageous leaders.*

*And New Power is innovative forms and uses of energy. A recent cartoon reminded us that the Stone Age didn't end because we ran out of stones. We don't have to mine and burn every block of coal before we phase out our dependence on coal. We're already smart enough to transition to new energy that is clean, affordable, sustainable, and creates new jobs. In fact, our survival may depend on it."*

### Teri Blanton

*KFTC chair, 2002-04*





**KFTC Officers** – In KFTC’s first years, we had only a chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Steering Committee. There was no Executive Committee. The duties of secretary and treasurer were handled by staff. In 1986, we added secretary-treasurer as a statewide elected position. Three years later, in recognition of KFTC’s growing membership outside of chapter counties, the position of at-large representative to the Executive Committee was created. The four statewide officers and the immediate past chairperson now make up the Executive Committee.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Chairpersons</b>   | <b>Vice-chairperson</b> | <b>Secretary/Treasurer</b> | <b>At-Large</b>        |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1981        | Gladys Maynard        | Mary Jane Adams         |                            |                        |
| 1981-82     | Gladys Maynard        | Mary Jane Adams         |                            |                        |
| 1982-83     | Gladys Maynard        | Mary Jane Adams         |                            |                        |
| 1983-84     | Gladys Maynard        | Mary Jane Adams         |                            |                        |
| 1984-85     | Sidney Cornett        | Mary Jane Adams         |                            |                        |
| 1985-86     | Sidney Cornett        | Mary Jane Adams         |                            |                        |
| 1986-87     | Mary Jane Adams       | Aloma Burke             | Denise Giardina            |                        |
| 1987-88     | Mary Jane Adams       | Patty Wallace           | Denise Giardina            |                        |
| 1988-89     | Patty Wallace         | John Burgess            | Michal Smith               |                        |
| 1989-90     | Patty Wallace         | Jean True               | Maynard Tetreault          | Daymon Morgan          |
| 1990-91     | Daymon Morgan         | Linda Brock             | Maynard Tetreault          | Jean True              |
| 1991-92     | Daymon Morgan         | Ray Tucker              | Gray Kidd                  | Jean True              |
| 1992-93     | Ray Tucker            | Carol Wright            | Debra Cornett              | Jane Harrod            |
| 1993-94     | Ray Tucker            | Carol Wright            | Debra Cornett              | Jane Harrod            |
| 1994-95     | Henry Riekert         | Randy Wilson            | Sharelle Lyons-Logan       | Alice Cornett          |
| 1995-96     | Jane Harrod           | Randy Wilson            | Tyler Fairleigh            | Aloma Burke            |
| 1996-97     | Jane Harrod           | Earl Wilson             | Sister Marie Gangwish      | Vanessa Little-Johnson |
| 1997-98     | Sister Marie Gangwish | Earl Wilson             | Sherri Barker              | Lamar Keys             |
| 1998-99     | Earl Wilson           | Lamar Keys              | Fannie Morris              | Teri Blanton           |
| 1999-00     | Earl Wilson           | Lamar Keys              | Fannie Morris              | Teri Blanton           |
| 2000-01     | Lamar Keys            | Janet Tucker            | Teri Blanton               | Patty Amburgey         |
| 2001-02     | Lamar Keys            | Janet Tucker            | Teri Blanton               | Patty Amburgey         |
| 2002-03     | Teri Blanton          | Doug Doerrfeld          | Patty Amburgey             | Janet Tucker           |
| 2003-04     | Teri Blanton          | Doug Doerrfeld          | Patty Amburgey             | Janet Tucker           |
| 2004-05     | Janet Tucker          | Patty Amburgey          | Doug Doerrfeld             | K.A. Owens             |
| 2005-06     | Janet Tucker          | Patty Amburgey          | Doug Doerrfeld             | K.A. Owens             |
| 2006-07     | Doug Doerrfeld        | K.A. Owens              | Steve Boyce                | Pam Maggard            |
| 2007-08     | Doug Doerrfeld        | K.A. Owens              | Steve Boyce                | Pam Maggard            |
| 2008-09     | K.A. Owens            | Steve Boyce             | Pam Maggard                | Susan Williams         |
| 2009-10     | K.A. Owens            | Steve Boyce             | Pam Maggard                | Susan Williams         |
| 2010-11     | Steve Boyce           | Sue Tallichet           | Dana Beasley Brown         | Rick Handshoe          |



*“KFTC is the one place where I found out what true leadership is all about.”*

**Aloma Burke**  
Pike County



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**Kentuckians For The Commonwealth**

on 30 years of

**Action for Justice!**

We are proud to partner with you  
in building a better Kentucky.



marguerite **casey** foundation

change is possible.