

KFTC

2011 Annual Report



Inside these pages:

- Campaign updates
- Strategy updates
- Courageous people
- Inspiring stories



Kentuckians For The Commonwealth is a community of people taking action for justice.

Contents

Letter from the Chair3
 30 Years of Action for Justice4
 August 27, 2011 5

Campaigns

Canary Project.....6
 New Energy & Transition7
 New Energy & Transition8
 New Energy & Transition9
 Economic Justice.....10
 Voting Rights 11

Strategies

Leadership Development.....12
 Communications 13
 Organizational Development14
 Voter Empowerment15
 Building Chapters16
 Building Alliances17
 Looking Forward18

Cover photos

Top: KFTC Chairperson Steve Boyce (left) and Executive Committee member Rick Handshoe (center) greeted Governor Steve Beshear in April as he prepared to tour Eastern Kentucky communities affected by coal mining.

Center Left: Anna and John Harrod entertained members at KFTC's 30th birthday party in August.

Center: KFTC members handed out "Tired of Hot Air?" fans at the Fancy Farm picnic in August.

Bottom Left: Central Kentucky members Christian and LaTanya Torp (left and center) participated in a rally for workers in September in Lexington.

Bottom Right: Lee Ann Paynter of Boyle County joined other KFTC members at a Kentucky Deserves Better rally in October.

Kentucky Rising

20 KFTC members entered Governor Steve Beshear's office on the morning of February 11, 2011, and most stayed for the weekend to protest his complicity with the coal industry. From left: Stanley Sturgill, Beverly May, Teri Blanton, Patty Wallace, Wendell Berry and Rick Handshoe. See Page 6.



KFTC is a grassroots organization of 7,500 members across Kentucky. We have 11 local chapters and at-large members in many other counties. We use a set of core strategies, from leadership development to communications and organizational development, to impact a broad range of issues, including coal, new energy and transition, economic justice and voting rights.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

The picture below makes me smile because it reminds me of how determined KFTC members are. Determined to make change for the better. To support each other. To show up whenever they're needed, sometimes at a moment's notice.



All 7,500 of us are bound together by a common vision. We see into the future and know that Kentucky can and will be better.

When we celebrated our 30th birthday in August, it was a time of looking back and looking forward. Longtime KFTC members remembered such seminal moments as the broad form deed victory in 1988, when voters across Kentucky affirmed the right of property owners to refuse strip mining on their land – thanks largely to KFTC organizing.

But throughout the birthday celebration, which included people of all ages and backgrounds, also ran a current of hope for the future. A confidence that here is where the difference will be made – working together we can accomplish so much more than any of us can do alone.

The past year has been a time of remarkable momentum for our organization. I invite you to enjoy the photos, quotes and updates in these pages. I'm proud of what we've accomplished and even more excited about what we have yet to do.

Steve Boyce

Steve Boyce
KFTC Chairperson



OUR VISION

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.

Kentuckians For The Commonwealth
 P.O. Box 1450
 London, Kentucky 40743
 (606) 878-2161
 www.kftc.org

30 Years of Action for Justice

KFTC members celebrate historic birthday ...



KFTC began in 1981 in Eastern Kentucky as the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition. When we gathered to celebrate our 30th birthday in August, long-time members such as Daymon Morgan (top left, left to right), Patty Wallace and Ruth Colvin reminisced about their creative work for justice. In the skit above, Daymon (center) and Patty (right) got in “bed” at the capitol to show how legislators were in bed with big business. Newer members also attended the birthday party – celebrating with art, music, a special film, dancing and games.



“KFTC showed me the way to become powerful through our many, many voices.”

—Jane Harrod, left
KFTC Chairperson, 1995-97



August 27, 2011

... with music, games, food and memories



“If you work together to stop exploitation, then you’ve got an organization that has power. That’s really what KFTC is about – empowering individuals.”

—Ray Tucker, left
KFTC Chairperson, 1992-94



“I wouldn’t have missed all the fun that I’ve had with KFTC and all the wonderful people I’ve met.”

—Patty Wallace
KFTC Chairperson, 1988-90

Canary Project



“Thirty years is all we have left of the coal, 30 years and then they are gone. They are going to leave here and we are going to be here with dirty water and dirty air and cancer clusters and birth defects.”

—Ivy Brashear (above) speaking to the EPA in August

Our work around coal and energy seeks to protect the air, land, water and people of Central Appalachia and especially Eastern Kentucky. And to shift our region from an unhealthy coal economy to a more just and sustainable one. We launched the Canary Project in 2003 to build a better future beyond coal. In 2011 we made unprecedented strides toward ending mountaintop removal and ushering in a clean energy future.

In February, during the Kentucky legislature, we brought our largest crowd ever – 1,200 people – to Frankfort for I Love Mountains Day (below). On the weekend before, 14 KFTC members calling themselves Kentucky Rising drew national attention by “sleeping over” in the governor’s office to protest his complicity with the coal industry. Among other requests, they asked the governor to visit Eastern Kentucky.

In April he did. Our members led the governor on a tour of communities affected by mining and described to him their vision for their region. The governor even tested water quality in healthy and mine-impacted streams.

And in August we hosted nine top-level EPA officials on a historic environmental justice tour of Eastern Kentucky. More than 150 Kentuckians – mothers, teachers, students, retired miners, nurses, entrepreneurs, the unemployed and many others – asked the federal officials to enforce the law and help create safe and healthy communities.

We also used litigation to strategically support our organizing while advancing our Canary goals. After citizens were called an “unwarranted burden” by the state energy and environment cabinet, a Frankfort judge allowed KFTC and allies to intervene in a case involving coal companies that violated the Clean Water Act and state water monitoring laws.



New Energy & Transition

As we move closer to ending mountaintop removal, our eyes are on the future. Our New Energy & Transition work is a natural extension of the Canary Project. Three campaigns – Renew East Kentucky, Sustainable Energy Policy, and the Appalachian Transition Initiative – offer hope and plans for clean energy and healthy communities.

Renew East Kentucky

KFTC and our allies stopped a coal-burning power plant from being built in Central Kentucky in 2010. We convinced East Kentucky Power Cooperative to shelve the plant in part by offering a sound alternative. The Renew East Kentucky plan would lower rates for co-op members and generate nearly 9,000 jobs in the region by using the infrastructure of EKPC’s 16 rural electric co-ops – employees, trucks, tools and more – to realize the savings of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

EKPC agreed to form a collaborative with KFTC and our allies to explore energy efficiency and renewable energy options. The Clean Energy Collaborative began meeting in 2011 with two KFTC members playing prominent roles – Tona Barkley as vice chair and Steve Wilkins as co-chair of the demand-side management workteam.

Leadership development was a key focus of Renew East Kentucky in 2011. In addition to the Clean Energy Collaborative, KFTC members worked to make their local co-ops more democratic, transparent and member-inclusive. In September, Nick Mullins and Carlen Pippin attended the Public Power Reform Conference in Atlanta. Other members met directly with their local co-op officials to introduce the How\$martKY program, an on-bill financing plan offered in four co-op districts by our partner the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development. Tona and another member, Cindy Shepherd, traveled to Boston in June for an organizing training led by Marshall Ganz. They learned to use the Ganz public narrative (story of self, story of us, and story of now) to describe Renew East Kentucky.



“It was exciting to see these different areas of KFTC work for a better, more sustainable future brought together so that we could learn from each other and understand how so much of our efforts are interrelated. I think this is going to be a great way to organize and build momentum for a transition away from coal mining and burning to renewable energy and a just and sustainable economy in Eastern Kentucky.”

—Mimi Pickering
NET Strategy Team member

New Energy & Transition

“My hope is that we can generate more awareness and a higher visibility for the options people have to take advantage of sustainable energy. Education is power, so I’d like to expand the opportunities for folks to learn about clean energy, both the things that already exist here in Kentucky such as the solar panel manufacturing plant in Danville, as well as how they can make changes in their own lives and energy usage.”

—Lee Ann Paynter
NET Strategy Team member

Sustainable Energy Policy

Our sustainable energy campaign seeks to pass good energy policies in Kentucky that open the door to the many benefits of renewables and energy efficiency. A Renewable and Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS) and feed-in tariffs would pave the way for residential energy upgrades and new growth in green industries and jobs.



We’re founding members of the Kentucky Sustainable Energy Alliance (KySEA), a group of more than 50 organizations working for good energy policy. The group has a wide range of stakeholders, from small businesses to economic justice and affordable housing groups.

In 2011, KySEA introduced the Clean Energy Opportunity Act, which got an unprecedented positive hearing in a committee led by a coal-county legislator. Lawmakers got excited about the potential for new green jobs in their districts.

More than 150 people – small business owners, housing groups, low-income advocacy organizations, legislators, energy experts, and concerned citizens – attended a Clean Energy Summit hosted by KySEA in January. The summit looked at the benefits of clean energy for utilities, human health, job creation, low-income families and homeowners, and the environment. A resounding theme of the day was the need for state policy that would open the door for clean energy businesses to invest in Kentucky and create new jobs.



www.kysea.org

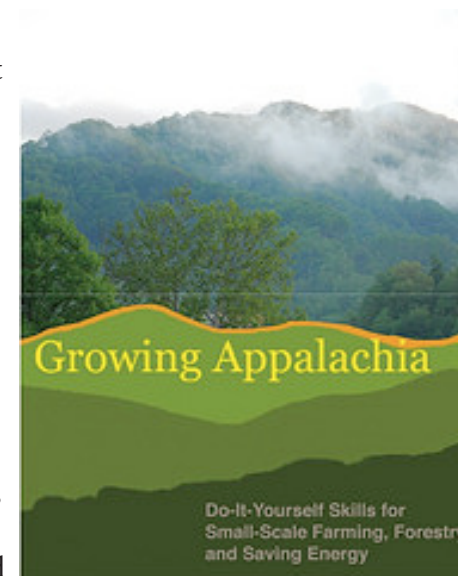
New Energy & Transition

Appalachian Transition Initiative

Our 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, environmental and health benefits. Working with the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED), we launched the Appalachian Transition Initiative in 2009 to foster a conversation throughout our region about the need and opportunity for transition.

The ATI vision emphasizes jobs that respect local resources – such as sustainable agriculture and small-scale forestry. Our second Growing Appalachia conference in April 2011 attracted twice the number of people who attended in 2010 – proving that the region is ripe for such a conversation. Topics ranged from growing edible mushrooms to retrofitting your home for energy efficiency through on-bill financing, community supported agriculture, and horse-drawn logging. The Floyd County KFTC Chapter followed up with a Mushroom Growing and Hunting Workshop in October (right).

We also continued the listening project, interviewing Eastern Kentucky folks to learn their values, hopes and fears for their region. We’ll dig deeper with focus groups this spring. What we learn will inform our work to develop a common vision for economic development in Appalachia.



“Solar works here. We’re living proof of it.”

—Elijah Collett of Leslie County, who powers his home with solar energy, speaking at the Growing Appalachia conference in April

www.appalachiantransition.net

Economic Justice



“Tax cuts, lack of regulation of the financial industry, and attacks on family planning and environmental safety regulations are endangering the lives and wellbeing of all Americans. Kentuckians are in a unique position to be hurt by these policies, and we are in a unique position to hold powerful congressmen accountable for these policies.”

—Shekinah Lavalley (above) at the Kentucky Deserves Better rally October 14 outside Rep. Hal Rogers’ office in Somerset

kydeservesbetter.tumblr.com

For several years KFTC has worked with a coalition of more than 20 organizations in Kentucky to pursue progressive tax reform in the state legislature. The Partnership for Kentucky’s Future supports a tax structure that is fair, provides adequate revenue over time, and ensures we have the public structures necessary for strong communities.

When U.S. Senator Rand Paul addressed the Kentucky Senate on February 22, KFTC and allied groups were prepared to counteract his anti-tax message with our vision of a healthier Kentucky. Homer White, a member of the KFTC Economic Justice Committee, gave testimony urging Kentucky lawmakers to consider our shared values and priorities when making funding decisions for our state – to pursue commonsense solutions that invest in the kinds of neighborhoods, communities, commonwealths, and nation we all value.

We launched a new campaign in 2011 called Kentucky Deserves Better that targets Kentucky’s Congressional delegation and particularly Congressman Hal Rogers. Rogers represents the Fifth District, which consistently ranks at the bottom in national rankings for quality of life indicators. We’re calling Rogers out for his pork projects and proposals



to cut programs such as WIC and Pell grants. As chair of the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee, Rogers has considerable power. But his budget priorities are taking us in the wrong direction.

On October 14, we held a rally outside his Somerset office, and we’ve launched a Kentucky Deserves Better website where members can send messages to Rep. Rogers (kydeservesbetter.tumblr.com/).

Voting Rights

Kentucky is one of a handful of states that deny voting rights to former felons unless they obtain a personal pardon from the governor. There’s also support among some politicians for limiting the voting rights of other groups such as the homeless and those without photo IDs.

Our members are working to build broad bipartisan support for a constitutional amendment that would automatically restore voting rights to former felons once they’ve served their debt to society. The bill has easily passed the Kentucky House each year but has stalled in the Senate because Senator Damon Thayer refuses to hear the bill in his State and Local Government Committee.

In February, hundreds gathered in Frankfort for a KFTC voting rights lobby day and rally in the capitol rotunda with former felon speakers, poetry, singing, and cheering. Besides lobbying, members wrote letters to the editor, talked about voting rights on the radio, and passed out handbills at various events. Singing for Democracy gatherings drew attention to voting rights and introduced new former felons and others to the campaign.

The New Power PAC, which we established in 2010, conducted a media campaign in 2011 around Kentucky’s secretary of state race. A candidate favored limiting voting rights for the homeless and former felons. With newspaper ads, mailers to targeted voters, Facebook ads, and a website (www.GoodDemocracyKY.org), we lifted up the stories of people who would have been disenfranchised by this candidate’s policies. The candidate lost the race, and election data indicate that our outreach may have played a role.



“I’m here to tell you right now: this is not a black or white issue. It’s not a Republican or Democrat issue. It is a human rights issue.”

—Tayna Fogle (above) speaking at the Voting Rights rally February 24 in Frankfort

“My name is April Browning.

I’m a Mom and that is the most important job I’ll ever have. **Why is Bill Johnson afraid to let me vote?**”

Bill Johnson is a candidate for Secretary of State — Kentucky’s chief elections officer. Unfortunately, his platform is much more about taking away voting rights from people like me than making our democracy stronger and deeper.

Help me spread my story and tell your own leading up to Election Day — because that’s the only way that Bill Johnson and other politicians will understand that our democracy needs to include every citizen.

To hear more of my story, visit www.GoodDemocracyKY.org.

If you have the right to vote, please exercise it on Tuesday, November 8.



Paid for by New Power PAC, www.GoodDemocracyKY.org. Not authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee.

Leadership Development



“I don’t know who I would be today or where I would be without KFTC.”

—Dana Beasley Brown (above)
KFTC Secretary-Treasurer

“I’ve learned more in my first year and a half of KFTC than I did the entire time I was in college.”

—Erika Skaggs
Steering Committee member

Leadership development is the first among equals of KFTC’s primary strategies. On our six statewide campaigns, hundreds of leaders are deeply engaged and actively leading others. These leaders grow through skills training, mentoring, exchange with other groups, and on-the-job practice.

In 2010 we launched New Power Leaders, one of our most ambitious and promising leadership development strategies ever. Each New Power Leader leads a cluster of 5 to 50 people, keeping them engaged on KFTC issues, encouraging them to vote and growing the organization.

In 2011 we committed significant staff time and capacity to the New Power Leader program, with staff development and a new position called Deputy Organizing Director for Leadership Development. This position focuses primarily on New Power Leaders—training staff, developing communications materials, and supporting our existing New Power Leaders while fostering a culture in which staff can effectively recruit new leaders.

New Power Leaders encouraged their cluster members to vote, asked them to join KFTC or renew their membership, and connected with other leaders through the NPL web pages. We continued to develop and refine the web pages, where leaders can network with other leaders, find support and discuss issues.

Our biggest leadership development event of the year – our Annual Meeting in October – attracted nearly 200 people, our largest group ever.



Communications

Because KFTC is built on relationships, communication has always been an important part of our organizing. Our communications program has evolved to keep pace with new technologies and audiences, but we’ve held to our goals of fostering community among our members, creating a shared vision of what’s possible, putting a human face on issues and challenging dominant frames. We want to inform and inspire our members and other Kentuckians.

In 2011 we created and sustained a buzz for a wide range of events from I Love Mountains Day to the Kentucky Deserves Better rally and many smaller local actions. We worked with members to prepare speeches, letters to the editor and op-eds, and generated a steady flow of local, state and national media hits.

We kept in touch with members and others through our blog, Facebook and email alerts. We experimented with new media such as Twitter while recognizing that many members prefer our newspaper, *balancing the scales*, and the telephone.

We began a major website overhaul to make our site more contemporary, functional and engaging. We’ll roll out the new website in early 2012. We refined the New Power Leader webpages and trained leaders to use the pages to network, discuss issues and support each other.

To observe our birthday, we produced a 40-minute video called “I Was There: The First 30 Years of Kentuckians For The Commonwealth” and a 60-page history booklet. And we invited members to look back and look forward.

“I think we don’t exist without communications. It’s another way of building community when people are separated by distance and culture.”

—Mary Love
Steering Committee member



Organizational Development



Scott County members hosted an Arty Pie Party fundraiser in November.

While using our power in six statewide campaigns, we're also building our power through New Power Leaders, grassroots fundraising, membership recruitment, and strengthening relationships with existing members.

As our primary leadership development strategy, New Power Leaders also help develop the organization by becoming sustaining givers and asking their cluster members to join or renew their membership. Through these small group relationships, we're deepening our members' involvement and investment.

Our 30th anniversary gave us a chance to reflect on our values, history and accomplishments and invite our members to invest in the next 30 years of KFTC. We premiered the film "I Was There: The First 30 Years of Kentuckians For The Commonwealth" at our birthday party in August, and chapters screened the film at local house parties and other 30th events.

"It's the power of togetherness that allows people to do something."

—Truman Hurt
Steering Committee member



We set our grassroots fundraising goal at \$350,000 – up from \$300,000 in 2010. And then we surpassed that goal by raising more than \$380,000.

We heightened the energy around our fall fundraising campaign with weekly email updates, a thermometer to show our progress, and targeted major donor asks.

We finished the year with a benefit concert December 29 in Louisville featuring musicians Jim James of My Morning Jacket, Ben Sollee and Daniel Martin Moore and authors Silas House and Jason Howard.

Voter Empowerment

Strengthening our democracy by involving more people in the electoral process is key to achieving our vision for Kentucky. Each year we register, educate and mobilize tens of thousands of voters through events, door-to-door, and other personal contact. Though voter turnout in Kentucky tends to be low, election records show that KFTC members vote at a much higher rate – more than 70%.

Besides registering and mobilizing voters, our members engaged in their democracy in 2011 by visiting legislators in Frankfort during the General Assembly, joining allies to lobby in Washington D.C., and attending the annual Fancy Farm political picnic in August.

Through the New Power PAC, we conducted a media campaign in the fall that focused on the secretary of state's race. We targeted the candidate whose campaign focused on limiting voting rights for the homeless, former felons and people without photo IDs. We interviewed homeless folks and former felons and published their stories on GoodDemocracyKY.org, in newspaper ads, postcards and on Facebook – telling this candidate plainly that we all benefit when everyone has a voice and a vote.



Throughout the year, KFTC members registered voters at events and store parking lots across Kentucky. In October, with the registration deadline near, some made it more interesting by dressing as zombies and carrying handbills that read "Zombies can't vote ... You can!"



"I didn't know much about state politics, but some state politicians certainly know me now. We know each other."

—Sue Tallichet
KFTC Vice Chairperson

www.GoodDemocracyKy.org
www.KentuckyElection.org

Building Chapters

The Harlan County chapter enjoyed a house party and film screening in December.



The Perry County chapter hosted a holiday party in December and invited Letcher and Knott members to join the fun.



Central Kentucky members gathered in February for a whole week of activities leading up to I Love Mountains Day, including this poster making party.

Floyd County members tabled at the Apple Festival in October.

Local chapters are the building blocks of KFTC, where our work takes root.

We have 11 chapters across the state: Harlan County, Floyd County, Letcher County, Perry County, Madison County, Rowan County, Central Kentucky, Scott County, Northern Kentucky, Jefferson County, and Bowling Green & Friends.

In 2011, our chapters worked on a range of issues, from coal mining impacts in Eastern Kentucky to coal ash in Louisville, payday lending in Northern Kentucky, and voting rights in Scott County.

They also found time for fun and fellowship, fundraising, voter empowerment and member recruitment. They carpoled to Frankfort to lobby and supported other chapters with their presence and voices at numerous events.



The Jefferson County chapter hosted Louisville Loves Mountains in May.



Building Alliances

We're stronger when we join forces with organizations that share our goals and bring different perspectives and skills to the work. In 2011, we worked closely with allies in the following coalitions, among others.

Alliance for Appalachia, a group of 13 organizations in the Southeast working to end mountaintop removal. www.allianceforappalachia.org.

Appalachian Transition Initiative, a partnership between KFTC and the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) to foster an open and participatory conversation about economic transition in the mountains. www.appalachiantransition.net

The Clean Energy Collaborative, which resulted when KFTC and allies stopped a coal burning power plant proposed by East Kentucky Power Cooperative. The Collaborative includes EKPC and its 16 member co-ops, KFTC, Kentucky Environmental Foundation, the Sierra Club, MACED and other public interest groups.

Kentucky Sustainable Energy Alliance, a group of more than 50 organizations from a variety of sectors who have come together around common goals for energy policy. www.kysea.org

Partnership for Kentucky's Future, which includes the Kentucky Education Association, Kentucky Domestic Violence Association and other tax reform allies. We also participate in the Tax Fairness Organizing Collaborative, a network of 28 member organizations in 24 states that use grassroots power to promote progressive tax reform.

Restoration of Voting Rights Coalition, our partners in the campaign to restore voting rights to former felons. This diverse group includes the NAACP, AFL-CIO, Catholic Conference, People Advocating Recovery, Kentucky Mental Health Coalition and more.

Stanley Sturgill was among the KFTC members who participated in the Alliance for Appalachia's Week in Washington lobby event in April.



"KFTC – we're not just about talk. We get things done. We're about action."

—Beth Bissmeyer
Jefferson County member

Looking Forward

When we began 2011, KFTC had just finished one of our most eventful years ever, with issue wins, organizational growth and innovation of our key strategies.



Jefferson County member Linda Stettenbenz at I Love Mountains Day

We knew 2011 would be special. It was our 30th anniversary year, and we planned to celebrate with a birthday party, commemorative film, and plenty of reminiscing about accomplishments and good times.

But even we were surprised at how remarkable 2011 turned out to be.

Our members slept over in the governor's office and led Governor Beshear on a tour of Eastern Kentucky. We brought the EPA to our own communities to show them what we mean when we say mountaintop removal should be stopped. We publicly called out politicians for lacking the backbone to pass meaningful tax

reform and limiting voting rights. And we blew the top off our grassroots fundraising goal.

Wherever we went, we made noise. But it was noise with substance. Our members are united by a vision of a better Kentucky and they know how to get there.

In 2012 we'll continue our pressure on state and federal officials to enforce mining laws and fund the agencies that protect our land, health and communities. We'll push for new energy policies that offer hope for a future beyond coal and a vibrant new economy in Appalachia. We'll work for a tax plan that strengthens our schools and other public structures. And we'll fight to expand – rather than limit – voting rights for former felons, the homeless and others.

As we've been saying, Kentucky deserves better. And it's time for New Power.

"I think that KFTC is always evolving and always changing."

—LaTanya Torp
Central Kentucky member

Have you joined KFTC?

To get involved, contact the KFTC office nearest you.

Main Office
P.O. Box 1450
London, KY 40743
131 North Mill Street
London, KY 40741
(t) 606-878-2161
(f) 606-878-5714

Whitesburg Office
P.O. Box 463
Whitesburg, KY 41858
(t) 606-632-0051
(f) 606-633-8555

Lexington Office
250 Plaza Drive, Suite 4
Lexington, KY 40503
(t) 859-276-0563
(t) 859-278-8644
(f) 859-276-0774

Louisville Office
901 Franklin Street
Louisville, KY 40206
(t) 502-589-3188
(f) 502-587-0054

Berea Office
140 Mini Mall Drive
Berea, KY 40403
859-986-1277

Prestonsburg Office
P.O. Box 864
154 North Lake Drive
Prestonsburg, KY 41653
606-263-4982

**Or visit us online at:
www.KFTC.org**





**KENTUCKIANS FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH**

30 Years of Action for Justice

P.O. Box 1450
London, Kentucky 40743
(606) 878-2161
www.kftc.org