

Dear Editor:

paring Mt. Vernon to London is very much like comparing apples to oranges. The two are just not the same. We are about forty percent smaller than London. We don't have the large tax base that London has. I believe that basing an occupational tax and net profit tax for Mt. Vernon on statistics from London is ridiculous. The 17 page proposed occupational and net profit tax was supposedly copied from Pulaski County. Again, we are not the same size or class as Pulaski, which is a county, not a small city. The committee should have researched cities the same class and size as Mt. Vernon. Of course this was not done, probably because 5th class cities with a tax base the size of Mt. Vernon's don't have an occupational/tax profit tax on their citizens.

The Mayor's committee supposedly researched (during only two meetings) the surrounding cities to determine the percentage to take out of your pocket. They did not research alternatives to this tax proposal other than to suggest charging those who park in the city parking lot. During the Monday, January 10 meeting it was stated that the one-percent occupational tax proposed in this ordinance was the same as London's. However, London is a 4th class-city with an estimated population of 7,201. Mt. Vernon is a 5th class-city with an estimated population of 2,873. Com-

The Mayor stated that the city had debts from water and sewer expenses, water tank and water plant expenses, from the City Park, from the Country Music Hall of Fame and some "director" of something. These amounts supposedly amount to 7.3 million. However, no one at City Hall seems to be exactly sure what is owed, when it is owed, how much the monthly payments are, or how much the current balance is in their budget. Instead of the previously owed \$92,000 for the city park we somehow owe

\$370,543.04. We owe the Country Music Hall of Fame \$24,000 that was supposed to have already been paid. The city supposedly owes \$247 thousand to the water and sewer department. The questions of whether or not the city can "borrow" from the water and sewer department was not adequately answered, so the legality of this debt is questionable. The water and sewer debts which were the largest part of the city deficit are supposed to be paid through federal and state grants and what all of us pay in water and sewer bills. This makes one wonder whether or not these bills should even be included in the city's debt.

Anyone who attends a council meeting quickly realizes that the people don't know what they owe, when it is due, and don't have a clue how to figure it out. It must also be noted that the state of Kentucky requires that city budgets be ended by February 1, following the end of the year. However, the audit for the 1998 budget has not been completed yet because the city can't get the correct information to the CPA. They haven't even thought about trying to audit the 1999 budget. Would you trust someone that manages or mismanages the city budget in this way with the authority to examine your tax records, your W-2 form, or your business records? The new ordinance gives authority for the city to do exactly that. This calls to mind letting the

The Occupational Tax Administrator job created by this ordinance allows someone from City Hall to examine all business books and records to look for discrepancies. If they can't find the budget at City Hall, do you think they are qualified to examine your business records?

When asked what the proposed funds generated from this tax would help to pay for, the Mayor mentioned a new water truck. Also mentioned was a city pool, new equipment for the new water plant, and repairing the holding tank on Sand Springs Road. That is how untold hundreds of thousands of your hard-earned dollars will theoretically be spent. What to do with the rest of the money generated year after year if this silly ordinance goes into effect is still as clear as mud at City Hall.

The actual ordinance is full of discrepancies. The first attention grabbers are the blank lines in the ordinance. All dates were left blank, perhaps on purpose. This was especially troublesome to me since one line contained the words "This ordinance shall become effective retroactive to _____." Retroactive could be yesterday or it could be two years ago. Would we then owe back occupational and net profits taxes for previous years? When questioned, the Mayor suggested, but did not confirm January 1, as the effective

date. Do you trust the city to fill in the blanks for you?

The mayor stated that the first \$2,000 of earnings would not be taxed. It sounded reasonable. However, upon close examination of the actual ordinance this only applies to a person over age 65 that is desperately trying to supplement their Social Security. The cost of this tax to the retired citizen could very well determine whether or not he has enough money left to get needed medicines or groceries.

The Mayor also stated that retirement, 401K, and social security would not be considered when assessing the tax for workers. However, the ordinance in Definition 21 under salaries says that gross pay will be used for calculation without deduction for social security benefits, retirement, insurance or other deductions. This means your retirement is taxed along with your social security contributions, and your 401K. So much for trying to save for your old age. A person working at two jobs within the city would have to pay the tax twice, since both incomes would be taxed.

We will also be required to complete a questionnaire detailing personal finances, social security numbers, addresses, etc. You could also be fined if you don't keep the records up to date. With the way the budget is being handled, do you want just anyone at city hall having access to

A special called meeting of the City Council of Mt. Vernon will be next **Monday, January 17 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall**. I strongly urge each working person affected by this foolish ordinance to call or see the members of the City Council in voice their displeasure at this ordinance. Show up at the meeting. Voice your opposition to this tax. Tell the council members see by your presence that you oppose the tax. Don't sit idly by and let the City of Mt. Vernon take what you seek so hard for. Remember this tax could be **retroactive**. It can be increased on the simple whim of the majority of the council since there is no provision within the ordinance to stop it from being increased whenever they can't balance their budget.

If you like to give away your money, then stay at home on Monday, January 17. If you like to give away money you need for food, medicine, utilities, then don't call or see your council member. If you think the city is managing their budget and can manage yours too, then stay at home. But if you don't want to give away your money, then you need to come to the meeting to show the

council members that you oppose the occupational/net profits tax.

Sharon Lovell
Orlando, KY

sponse to the number of visitors, the Company opened a 34-acre enter-

tainment destination, Longaberger Homestead in June 1999 and Longaberger Golf Club in May 1999.

The Longaberger Company has been recognized in *Forbes Magazine* for four consecutive years as one of the Top 500 Largest Private Held Companies in the U.S. It was founded in 1973 by the late Dave Longaberger and today, Dave's eldest daughter, Tami Longaberger, serves as President and CEO and her sister, Rachel Longaberger leads the Company's giving efforts as President of The Longaberger Foundation. More than 7,600 employees from 36 Ohio counties are employed by the Company and over 56,000 Independent Longaberger Sales Associates market and sell a full line of Longaberger Baskets; pottery and dinnerware; fabric and home accessories; and wrought iron products throughout home shows nationwide. For more information about The Longaberger Company, visit its website at www.the-longaberger.com or call 1-800-966-0374.

Local Longaberger Branch Advisor, Jenny Sweet, from Mt. Vernon recently attended The Longaberger Company's annual Advisors Meeting in Columbus, Ohio. More than 1,700 Longaberger Advisors from around the United States attended.

During the three-day convention, known as "JAM," Advisors attended Longaberger University training sessions, received recognition for their management accomplishments and had the opportunity to network with Advisors from around the country. Independent Longaberger Advisors draw from their own business experience to provide direction and training for the Independent Sales Consultants. They sponsor, helping them to establish and build their own Longaberger business.

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Mr. and Mrs. Gary Gentry would like to proudly announce the birth of their second son, Levi Tucker, born December 15, 1999 at Pattie A. Clay Hospital. He weighed 8 lbs. and 5 ozs. and was 21 inches long. Levi was welcomed home by his big brother, Lucas Davis. Maternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. David Henderson of Mt. Vernon. Paternal grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Bill Gentry of Brodhead. Maternal great grandparents are Joe Abney of Disputanta and the late Ruth Abney. Paternal great grandparents are Jewell Albright of Brodhead and the late Ambrose Albright.



Introducing...Emily Brooke Adams. Miss Emily was born to Barry and Carrie Bennett Adams on October 29, 1999. She weighed 9 lbs. and 4 ozs. Miss Emily was welcomed home by her two older siblings, Chris Winn, 9 and Saa Adams, 4. Maternal grandparents are Sonny and Barbara Bennett of Mt. Vernon. Paternal grandparents are Robert and Margy Adams of Brodhead. We would like to thank everyone for all the sweet gifts we have received for Emily.

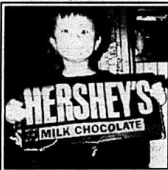
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