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22 BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARDS *Business First*

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Emerging Business of the Year *Finalist*

Lobbying, advising is firm's role

BATES STARTED FIRM AFTER WITHDRAWING FROM FLETCHER TICKET

BY PATTI SMITH

BUSINESS FIRST CORRESPONDENT

*H*unter Bates refuses to dwell on the past—or look too far into the future.

He said his focus as president of Bates Capitol Group LLC is to help clients such as the American Beverage Association, United Parcel Service Inc., BellSouth, Microsoft Corp., Dell and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, achieve their goals today.

That mission, which he set out to accomplish in May 2003, has carried his firm through tremendous growth on a local, state and national basis.

“Louisville is full of smart, aggressive entrepreneurs who are achieving great things for themselves and the community, so for us to be in the same room with these types of people is a genuine honor,” said Bates, referring to his firm’s placing as a finalist in the emerging business category of Business First’s Business of the Year awards program.

Advocating for Appriss, farm organizations

Bates and colleagues Holly Hacker, director of federal affairs for his company, and Patrick Jennings, director of state affairs for the firm, have worked together to direct the company’s action as a lobbyist on behalf of several groups, including Louisville-based Appriss Inc., which provides notification services to crime victims when perpetrators are released from prison.

Appriss approached Bates Capitol



“If, at the end of my life, I look back on my career and see that it was one of service, I will feel like it’s been a success. It is far more important what you do and how you do it than what title you carry.”

HUNTER BATES
BATES CAPITOL
GROUP LLC

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Group in an attempt to gain federal support to complete a nationwide victim-notification program, Bates said.

Bates Capitol “shared the Appriss vision and technology” with the Kentucky delegation in Congress. Ultimately, Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell “secured federal support to launch a matching program to help states complete a nationwide victim notification program,” Bates said.

Bates Capitol Group also worked with a large coalition of farm organizations to try to keep farmers’ issues fore-

most in the minds and on the agenda of key policymakers regarding the tobacco buyout legislation passed in 2004.

Path to a new venture

Bates, a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University and Harvard Law School, spent several years in Washington, D.C., as legal counsel and chief of staff to McConnell. He also served as chief counsel of the Senate Rules Committee from 1999 to 2000 and was McConnell’s campaign manager in 2002.

Then-Congressman Ernie Fletcher

BATES

selected Bates to run on his ticket as his lieutenant governor candidate in 2003.

Just weeks before the May primary, however, an Oldham County judge ruled that Bates was not qualified as a resident of the state based on his years spent working in Washington, D.C. Bates removed himself from the ticket, rather than appeal the decision.

Immediately, Bates formed a plan to launch a firm that would keep him active in business, government and policy. Within weeks after the primary, he opened Bates Capitol Group.

"I had been in public service my entire career. This was a way for me to stay involved," he said. "It's very gratifying to end up doing something you never thought about doing, and find yourself truly enjoying what you're doing."

He is not sure if he will run for public office, but if the opportunity arises, he will consider it.

For now, "I'm thoroughly enjoying my

court-ordered trip to the private sector," he said.

Serving EKU, Baptist Healthcare

Bates is on the Eastern Kentucky University Board of Regents and serves on the board of Baptist Healthcare System.

He was a delegate to the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York City.

He also is of counsel with Frost Brown Todd LLC law firm, which has offices in Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and Tennessee.

Bates' workweek can be hectic, since his firm has offices in Louisville, Frankfort, Ky., and Washington, D.C., but he holds his weekends sacred. Bates lives in Prospect with his wife, Jennifer Chapman Bates, and two children, Hunter II and Anna Lane.

"I strive to prioritize my family. I can live without succeeding in a lot of areas, but the one place I have to succeed is as a father and a husband," he said.

Bates Capitol Group LLC

President: Hunter Bates, 37

Business description: A public affairs, government relations and business development company

Mission: To use the firm's government experience and expertise to advocate public-policy decisions that best serve Kentucky and the nation.

Employees: Four

Main address: 400 W. Market St.,
32nd floor, Louisville, Kentucky 40202

Phone: 779-8600

Web site: www.batescapitol.com

Founded: 2003

PATTI SMITH is a free-lance writer for *Business First*. E-mail comments on this article to JBBERZOF@BIZJOURNALS.COM.