

STORY

KENTUCKY HAS ONE TO TELL.™

A JAVA JOURNEY
KENTUCKY'S COFFEE TRAIL CONNECTS
COMMUNITIES IN THE BLUEGRASS

GET USED TO THE IDEA
FOUNDER KRIS KIMEL STARTS IDEAFESTIVAL
IN KY, NOW A GLOBAL CURIOSITY

NO SHRINKING VIOLET

LOUISVILLE FLORIST PLAYS DIRTY
WITH NEW CSA PROGRAM



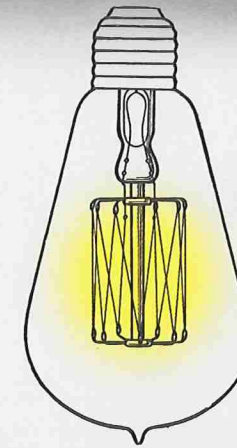
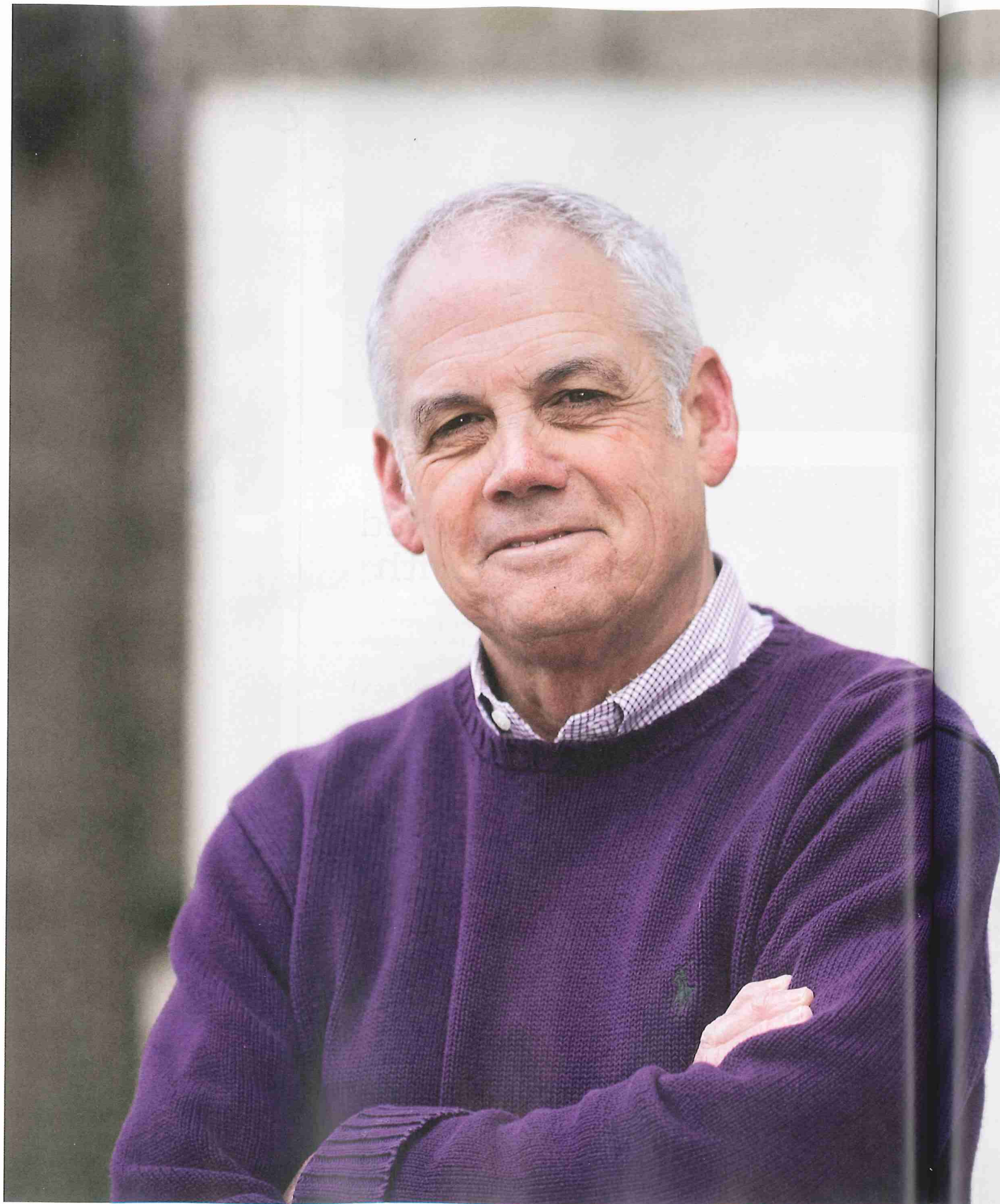
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IDEAFESTIVAL
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THE BIG IDEA

IDEAFESTIVAL FOUNDER KRIS KIMEL
IS FULL OF THEM

by Julie Wilson Photos by Magnus Lindqvist

**"ALL THE FORCES IN
THE WORLD ARE NOT
SO POWERFUL AS AN
IDEA WHOSE TIME
HAS COME."
— VICTOR HUGO**

It came in 2000. The idea to create an organic, free-thinking event that would appeal to everyone from professionals to middle schoolers.

Besides a Maroon 5 concert, there weren't many gigs back in that day that had a chance to reach all of these markets. Until IdeaFestival.

Its premise is simple. "[IdeaFestival] is a recognition that innovation and creative work really emerges from those that understand the cross-fertilization of ideas," said Kris Kimel, founder of IdeaFestival. "It's focusing on the critical importance of creative thinking and innovation in today's world, regardless of your particular area of interest."

AND IT ALL HAPPENS HERE

And for the past 11 years, this assembly of idea makers – from arts and science to education and design – has been going down in Louisville. Not Geneva, Switzerland. Not Tokyo. Louisville. Louisville, Kentucky.

"Obviously, we got a lot of questions as to why this is in Kentucky," admitted Kimel. "This is not a Kentucky event;

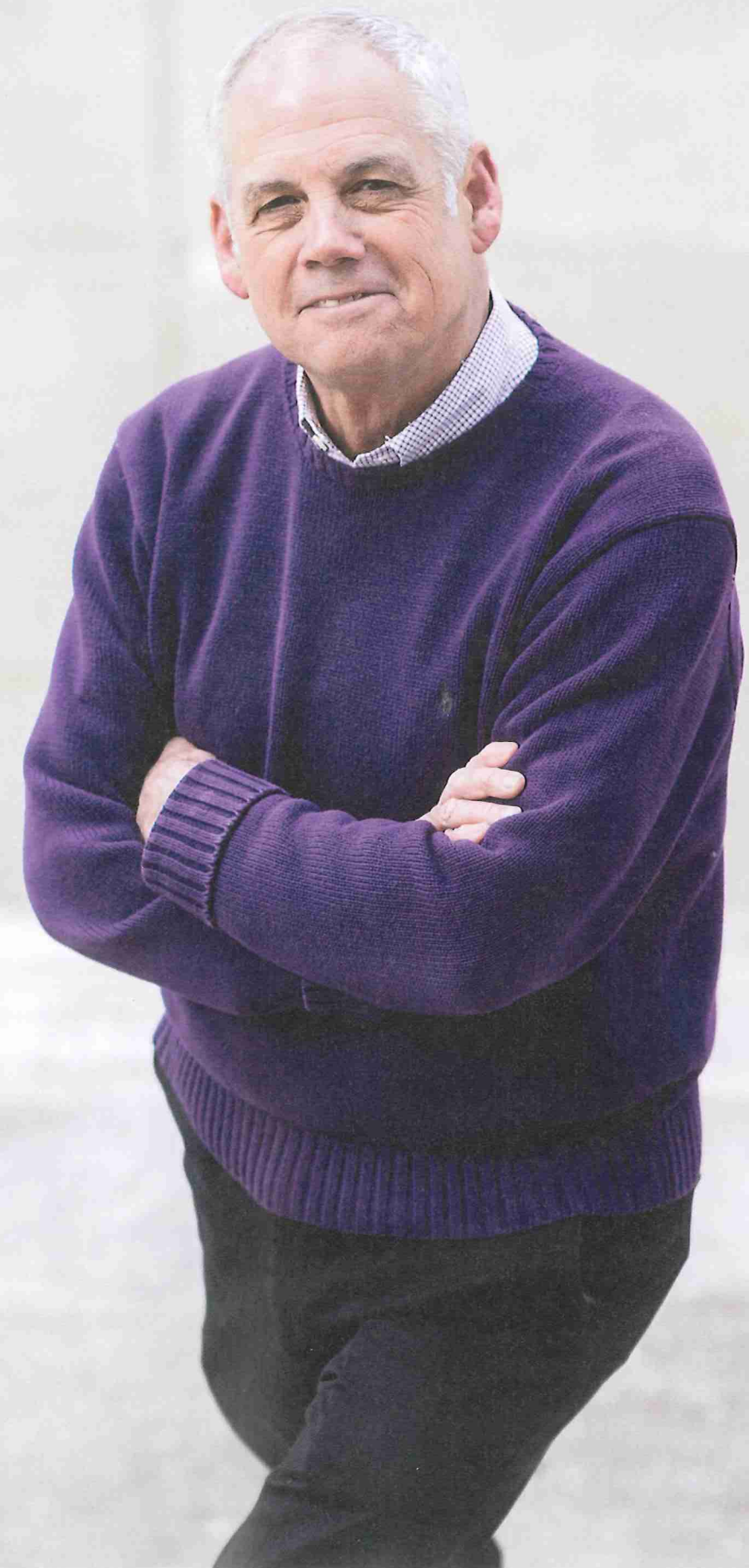
→ THE IDEAFESTIVAL RUNDOWN

This year's event will be Sept. 25-27 at The Kentucky Center in Louisville.

Some of this year's featured speakers include Beth Comstock, GE's first female Chief Marketing Officer in more than 20 years; Dr. Tererai Trent, the founder of Tinogona, which builds and repairs schools in rural Zimbabwe; and Lance Hosey, Chief Sustainability Officer of RTKL, architect and author of "The Shape of Green: Aesthetics, Ecology, and Design."

For more details, visit IdeaFestival.com.

"WE FELT THAT KENTUCKY WAS POSITIONED TO SUPPORT SOMETHING LIKE THIS. [THE STATE] RECOGNIZES THAT CREATIVITY OF IDEAS FOR INNOVATION IS SO IMPORTANT."



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the vision has always been for this to be an international event." And with attendees and presenters coming from all over the world, their vision has been realized.

But Kentucky plays a large role in what Kimel sees as a void in this area of creative thought. "The whole middle of the country was underserved," he said. "We felt that Kentucky was positioned to support something like this. [The state] recognizes that creativity of ideas for innovation is so important."

It may even be fair to say that Kentucky was a draw, considering the myriad of presenters who have signed up over the years. Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple, inventor and entrepreneur. Dom Sagolla, co-creator of Twitter. Sir George Martin, CBE, English record producer (yes, the legendary producer of The Beatles).

ATTEND COLLAGE

A variety of people from all walks of life come to IdeaFestival. And attendance has been dramatic. "For the first time ever, last year we completely sold out," said Kimel, of the 1000s of people entering its doors.

Which is no small feat, with a \$375 ticket price (and that's for advance tickets). But let's be fair and put it in perspective. TED Conference, which is a four-day engagement associated with the TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) nonprofit, costs \$7,500 to attend. With that steep of a price tag, they are only attracting a small segment of the population.

IdeaFestival, on the other hand, reaches everyone from high school students to such revered companies as Brown-Forman and Ford Motor Company. And probably the biggest factor in appealing to this caliber of attendee? Two words: disruptive change.

DO NOT PARDON THE DISRUPTION

Disruptive change is the battle cry, the spirit of IdeaFestival. "We're talking about more than just marginal improvement," explained Kimel when asked what this moniker meant. "It's something that really fundamentally, at a deep level, changes the way someone thinks about a problem or a way it's solved."

He gives the iPhone as an example. "It was a disruptive innovation, not just a little improvement over cell phones. It's something that jars the status quo and sends us off into a new way of thinking."

Sometimes the change can be so jarring that people's entire lives changes course.

A NEW CHAPTER

Of those who have attended the event in the past, some left with life-changing results. "A year ago I got a note from a young man who is now president of the 2013 medical school class of U of L," shared Kimel. "He decided to go into medicine when he was 14 at IdeaFestival."

Some have moved to Kentucky due to their IdeaFestival experience. Others have quit their corporate gigs to start their own companies.

This is just how Kimel, whose "day job" is president of Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation in Lexington, and his team want it. The process of inspiring change is part of the IdeaFestival philosophy, and to succeed at this, ideas need to come from everywhere.

So how do you plan an agenda for such a moving target? "It's very chaotic and organic, deliberately," Kimel admitted. "Ideas and suggestions come from everywhere – former attendees, presenters – and they all go into a pot that gets stirred up."

The resulting outline is more like a masterpiece. "Suddenly it's like this piece of art – a stroke of red, a stroke of orange and at the end of the year, we have a festival," explained Kimel. ■