

ROUNABOUTS,

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A large crowd was in attendance last week for the first meeting of the year for the Russell County Chamber of Commerce.

whereas it used to take 20 or 30 minutes,” he said.

The engineer said roundabouts can often be more efficient than traffic lights.

As a fun fact, Dick said the Doughboy Monument in Jamestown could be considered a roundabout.

“But there’s parking there...which you don’t usually associate with roundabouts,” he said.

Using a series of visual aids, Dick discussed specific areas included in the project.

JAMESTOWN BYPASS

Dick said the southern-most part of the project currently sees “a little less congested,” and could be considered later in proposed plans.

CASEY’S/FRUIT OF

THE LOOM DRIVE

Dick informed the crowd the traffic light at Fruit of the Loom Dr. was once considered for removal.

“This light is not even warranted anymore,” he said. “We got a little pushback when we wanted to take it out, so we just kinda left it in there. This process would take a lot out.”

BRIAN WALTERS DRIVE/WEST ROAD

“This one will probably never be built,” Dick said, “unless we connect Brian Walters Dr. to Progress Dr. on the backside. There’s a gap between these two roadways. It’s in our plan to look at.”

PROGRESS DRIVE

“This one may be a little different because there might not be as much traffic,” Dick said. “We need the traffic to

help people pump their brakes...break the traffic up a little...create a gap.”

RUSSELL COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL/ HIGH SCHOOL

“They (roundabouts) all look the same until we get up around the high school,” Dick said.

“Here’s where it gets interesting,” Dick said. “Currently, this is where most of our crashes are at. “We’re about to make our final decision on our design,” he told the crowd. “We’re looking at...we’re probably going to four-lane from here all the way to KY. 619 with two-lane roundabouts.”

“Anybody who lives up that way, they’ll be glad to have a roundabout,” Dick said.

He cited a present “long wait” at a traffic light in that area.

“So that’s going to replace it,” he said.

A meeting set for this week with the school system may determine how work will progress.

“It may change the traffic pattern...which may change where we’re going to put a roundabout,” Dick said.

Regardless, much consideration and planning is involved.

“These roundabouts here are probably three years down the road,” he said.

ERIK LANE

“We would eliminate Erik Ln (at Lakeland Insurance Group at U.S. 127) and tie-in,” Dick said. “That would be another exit for the school. An entrance or exit...making it much safer pulling in or out of there.”

A roundabout would help with those pulling from Lakeway Drive onto U.S. 127. “There’s a lot of rear end (collisions) there,” the engineer said. “This would help alleviate that.”

FIVESTAR/VOILS ROAD

This section would involve “a raised median,” Dick said. “You can’t cross them.”

The engineer is pushing for a possible “leg” for access at FiveStar.

“I’m fighting to keep that in there as part of this project...because I think it would help break traffic...and benefit our roundabout and the flow of traffic.”

LOUIE B. NUNN

CUMBERLAND PARKWAY

An intriguing aspect, the “stretched peanut”-shaped section of roundabouts would be utilized in this area.

There would also be a “shared use path,” Dick said.

“Roundabouts in this area would assist with the flow of traffic on and off the parkway,” he said

“It would be a big improvement, I think,” the engineer said.

KY. 619

“This may be the most challenging one to build,” he said. “The first thing they’d do is take the (traffic) light,” Dick said. “That’s going to be interesting...but they build these all the time.”

The roundabout would benefit from landscaping as long as it’s not a distraction to drivers, he said.

The engineer used a video to show the projected “flow” of traffic traveling through the roundabouts.

“This is similar to the amount of traffic we have in an afternoon,” he said.

Dick explained with a series of roundabouts, drivers will not be waiting for traffic lights.

“It keeps them moving,” he said. “They do a pretty good job. They help move traffic. It will move traffic.”

Addressing industry

and tourism, Dick assured the audience both semis and boats traveling along the proposed path will be able to navigate the roundabouts without concern.

The engineer said construction could possibly begin “this fall or this spring.”

Rep. Josh Branscum has been approached about securing funding in the state highway plan, Dick said.

“We’ve got hopes to get it done,” he said.

Each roundabout costs approximately “\$2 million,” Dick told a captive audience, and current discussions involve “concepts.”

“They can be shifted this way or that way,” he said.

In early planning stages, “we are trying to stay away from environmental, gas pumps, stuff like that.”

“Our goal is possibly 619, parkway, FiveStar... at one time..., and move down...in front of the high school,” the engineer said. “And that may be the end of it for two or three years. Depends on traffic. Most of our traffic is from the high school north.”

Dick is optimistic about the roundabout project.

“I hope that people are happy with these,” he said, “that they see them and get used to them. They’ll be a learning curve for everyone.”

“Be Still And Know.”
A Journey Through Addiction and A Life Redeemed

Mary Beth Sallee
JOBNews.com

For years, Maria Grimsley used alcohol to quiet the noise in her mind and heart. What began as a coping mechanism slowly became a life-threatening dependency.

But now, as she approaches three years of sobriety, Maria is sharing a story not just of addiction, but of faith, healing, and redemption.

In order to understand addiction, one must first recognize its root cause. For Maria, her struggles stemmed from years of layered trauma, including unhealthy relationships, emotional abandonment, domestic violence, the loss of her dad and brother, mother wounds, and unresolved childhood wounds.

“Alcohol became a way to cope to escape the heaviness,” Maria shared. “It was less about the substance itself and more about trying to survive what I was carrying. That feeling of numbness and my brain shutting off is what I was chasing...What started as something early on slowly became a way to numb pain, quiet my thoughts, and escape feelings I didn’t know how to process.”

During her addiction, Maria appeared

functional - still working, still showing up, and still smiling. Internally, however, she was deeply overwhelmed, anxious, and disconnected.

“I hated myself,” Maria said. “Life felt like a cycle of numbing I just couldn’t stop. It was easier to escape than to sit and work on myself and see the person in the mirror who wreaked havoc on the ones I loved and on myself.”

Maria thought she was hiding her addiction well. The bottles. The pain. The slow unraveling. Even after wrecking several vehicles while under the influence and teetering on the brink of losing everything, she still couldn’t turn away from alcohol.

But then one sentence from someone who barely knew her cut Maria to the core: *You’re going to kill yourself if this doesn’t stop.*

“It just took that one person who didn’t even know me yet to say it out loud,” Maria said, reflecting on the moment that saved her life. “I thought I was hiding it well. But I knew I wasn’t hiding it at all at that very moment. Thank God for them. Honestly. My addiction would have killed me.”

But it didn’t. Because of someone’s blunt honesty, as well as God’s grace, Maria will be celebrating three years of sobriety this May.

“My faith, honesty, boundaries, and routine help ground me,” Maria said. “I stay connected to safe people, spend time outdoors, move my body a lot, and allow myself to feel emotions - the good, the bad, and the ugly. Instead of running from them, I face them. There might be a lot of crying, but I sit with those feelings. Remembering where I came from and how far I’ve come keeps me rooted.”

Maria also finds inspiration in who she is becoming and in the people who walk beside her.

“The woman I’m becoming and have become inspires me, because I know where I was at,” Maria said. “My God, my partner, and the people who quietly watch my journey and feel less alone because of it also motivate me. I don’t want to waste the second chance I was given, and honey, it was more than a second chance!”

“I’m most proud of my honesty with myself,” Maria continued. “No one wants to be a

problem to themselves and others, but some fall into the hands of addiction. Family and friends told me I’d never get sober, and here I am, dancin’ every day through it!”

Looking back at where she was compared to where she is now, Maria is not just surviving. She’s thriving.

“I have clarity, self-respect, peace, and hope,” Maria said. “Things I didn’t think were possible during my addiction, I’m doing as we speak.”

For Maria, that includes learning to forgive herself by understanding that she did the best she could with what she knew at the time.

“Forgiveness came when I stopped seeing my past as a failure and started seeing it as a foundation for compassion and growth,” Maria explained. “If God can forgive a sinner and addict like me, then I can, too.”

When asked if she could describe her current season of life in one word or quote, Maria referred to Bible verse **Psalm 46:10**, which says, **“Be still, and know that I am God...”** It’s a call to find rest and acknowledge God’s sovereignty and presence even

amid chaos, recognizing Him as the source of one’s refuge and strength.

“This season is about trusting the process, growing quietly, and realizing I don’t have to have all the answers to be okay,” Maria said. “...I’m still worthy.”

It is faith, positivity, and honesty with one’s self that Maria said she would encourage others who are battling addiction or are in early recovery to seek.

“Walk by faith and not by sight,” Maria said. “Eat all the ice cream if need be. Cry it out as much as you need. You are not broken, you are hurting. Early recovery is hard because your body and heart are learning how to feel again. That discomfort isn’t failure - it’s healing. You don’t have to see a hopeful future yet. Just stay today. Hope will come later. You are allowed to start over, to heal slowly, and to ask for help. You are not too far gone, and you are not alone.”

For Maria herself, she is moving forward into the new year with continued growth, peace, and purpose both personally and also professionally with her wildflower

business, The Glimmer Patch.

“I’m looking forward to expanding my community work and continuing to live a life rooted in authenticity in this beautiful town that healed my broken heart,” she said. “...I want to continue to sprinkle a glimmer of love and move forward with intention. I want to keep building a life that reflects healing, honesty, and hope, and to use my story to remind others that transformation is always possible. We’re not always stuck. We do recover and make a beautiful life for ourselves.”

As the new year continues to unfold, Maria Grimsley is in a chapter of her journey that she once thought was out of reach. The woman who once turned to alcohol to quiet the noise and heartache has learned instead to be still and know this: God was there in the breaking, and God is still there in the healing. Nearly three years sober, Maria is no longer simply surviving. She is moving forward with intention and purpose, trusting that the same God who carried her through addiction will continue to lead her into a life redeemed.