
Posted on Wed, Jun. 21, 2006

Still a bad idea

Don't resurrect tax incentive plan for Cabela's

Kentucky has more miles of running water than any other state except Alaska, the longest recorded cave system in the world, the unique and beautiful grasslands of the Bluegrass and the horse industry they support, the majestic Appalachians, including some of the best, most accessible rock-climbing in the country, and claims Daniel Boone, Abraham Lincoln and Muhammad Ali among American icons who have lived and worked here.

So, why, exactly, do we need to give millions of dollars to a big Nebraska retailer to attract tourists?

Is this low self-esteem taken to the state level?

A package of incentives for Cabela's, the nation's largest sporting goods retailer, to build one of its theme-park-like stores about six miles from the Tennessee border near Bowling Green, died before the regular session of the General Assembly ended this spring.

Now, there are mutterings that that plan, involving tax credits of \$10 million to \$20 million, could be revived in a special session.

It wasn't a good idea then, and it's not a good idea now.

Here are the reasons:

- We'd be paying someone to come and compete with Kentucky-owned businesses.
- Cabela's, no matter how successful, will not create the kind of jobs we should be aiming for. Instead, we'd get retail jobs from the store with spinoff tourism dollars creating restaurant, hotel/motel, gas station and similar jobs.
- It's just not fair to the people and businesses in Kentucky who do pay taxes. If Cabela's gets a break on taxes, why not you? What will be cut from the state's budget, or added to the tax burden of others, to make up for this gift?

We've got just one message for Kentucky lawmakers: Just say no.