



# AIR TIME

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Applied Information Resources is a non-profit, public policy research and community information organization dedicated to:

- Citizen education on public issues.
- Assisting human service organizations in evaluating their programs, and
- Providing the best possible information to decision makers responding to changing human and urban needs.

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## STRENGTHENING THE CITIZEN VOICE

AIR has a two part goal in 2007 to renew its role as a catalyst for effective citizen participation in Greater Cincinnati. In the arena of political reform, AIR will reactivate the Fair Elections Coalition, the diverse network of grassroots groups that worked successfully for local campaign finance reform in 2001. It will also serve as the organizer of an informal Civic Round Table where civic groups can share information on their activities while collaborating on critical public issues when consensus can be reached.

This is not new territory for Applied Information Resources. Back in the

early 1990s, AIR served as the secretariat for the Civic Confederation, a group of civic leaders assembled by Louise Spiegel to work on issues related to young people in Greater Cincinnati. Besides informal monthly meetings, the Confederation held

**Once again, Louise Spiegel, AIR's board chair, takes the lead in bringing together people to participate in a Civic Round Table.**

a series of town meetings focusing on children-at-risk and then the Cincinnati Public Schools. The need for a local advocate for children emerged as the primary finding of one town meeting; setting the stage for the establishment of a Cincinnati office of the Children's

Defense Fund.

More recently, AIR played a pivotal role in building a citizen movement that led to the adoption of a Cincinnati City Charter Amendment establishing campaign finance reform requirements. Beyond researching the issue, AIR helped organize the Fair Elections Coalition, and did much of the day to day work that led up to the initiative campaign.

Once again, Louise Spiegel, AIR's board chair, takes the lead in bringing together people to participate in a Civic Round Table. Disturbed that the civic and non-profit perspective was not included in a recent public forum on an important issue, she

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## AIR CONTINUES WORK ON BRIDGING THE RACIAL DIVIDE

Applied Information Resources continues its work on issues of race in 2007. Last year, AIR released a survey on racial attitudes that revealed significant differences in the perceptions of white and African-American residents about life in Cincinnati. Moving forward from that report, AIR currently buttresses the survey data with further information, while it also focuses on identifying processes and projects aimed at bridging the City's racial divide.

Since releasing the survey last March, AIR has held focus groups and conducted interviews with diverse citizens and community leaders. Although the random telephone survey involving over 500 citizens provided a lot of infor-

mation, it could not plumb the reasons fueling the opinions expressed. In that regard, the group and individual sessions offer a context to the surveys and greater depth than was possible in the telephone interviews.

Beyond complementing the results of the survey, the interviews were structured in such a way as to tap the opinions of the interviewee about what is working in terms of improving race relations in Cincinnati. This aspect of the interview process feeds into an assignment from the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission to research "best race relations' practices" both nationally and locally. The work for CHRC will especially emphasize race relations in Cincinnati's

neighborhoods. The goal is to highlight neighborhoods such as Kennedy Heights where white and black residents have over the years forged good living and working relationships.

This additional work on race relations will result in a second report that will build from last year's survey data. After circulating the findings among diverse community leaders, AIR will collaborate with other interested groups in planning and holding a forum that will not only deal with the current reality of race relations but will address "where do we go from here?"

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STRENGTHENING THE CITIZEN VOICE

brought together some leaders from that sector to discuss strengthening

the civic voice in public decision making. The group has met several times since last May, and the goal for 2007 is to create an ongoing Round Table with a framework for communications and potential actions.

Meanwhile, the November election, that set new re-

ords for collecting and spending money sets the stage for launching a new educational initiative stressing the need for further campaign reforms. Included in the original Charter Amendment passed in 2001, the public financing of campaigns was rescinded by Cincinnati voters in 2002. However, with the backdrop of 2006 campaign spending, public financing emerges as one of the few vehicles designed to return

ownership of elections back to average citizens. Other issues for the Fair Elections Coalition to review are the lack of campaign finance regulations for Ohio counties and for local and state initiatives and amendments.

AIR has earmarked a portion of its recent fund drive to cover its work on these important citizen participation efforts. It will also seek grants from foundations concerned about citizen participation and election reform.

## JENNIFER BRUNNER, FIRST WOMAN ELECTED SECRETARY OF STATE


Ohio voters made Jennifer Brunner Ohio's first woman elected secretary of state on



Jennifer Brunner

November 7, 2006. Jennifer brings a unique perspective and exceptional credentials to be Ohio's top election official. Her prior service as Legislative Counsel for the Secretary of State's Office, 13 years of election law private practice experience, including serving as a special prosecutor for election fraud, and past experience as a member of the Franklin County Board of Elections clearly demonstrate her ability to be an effective and fair Secretary of State.

Jennifer Brunner served

as a Judge of the Franklin County Common Pleas Court for nearly five years. She was elected to an unexpired term in 2000, edging out a governor's appointee,  and was re-

***Jennifer Brunner  
will speak at  
AIR's Annual  
Dinner on  
Tuesday, June  
26, 2007***

elected to a 6-year term in 2002. Brunner resigned from the bench on September 1, 2005, to run for Ohio Secretary of State. While serving on the bench, Brunner pioneered the practice of allowing jurors to ask questions and started the county's first adult felony drug court.

Jennifer Brunner has pledged elections for Ohio that are free, fair, open and honest that can be audited and verified. She will ensure the accuracy and equal distribution of voting machines and enforce laws against voter intimidation and fraud. She will honor the role of Secretary of State and not use the office or title to campaign for issues or candidates. She and her husband, Rick, have three adult children and live in Columbus.

Brunner's stated four goals for her first term of office are: to restore trust to Ohio elections, ensure business filings that are quick, efficient and easy to retrieve, protect social security numbers from disclosure and create and maintain a social health index.

*Article taken from Jennifer Brunner's website [www.jenniferbrunner.com](http://www.jenniferbrunner.com)*

### CONTRIBUTIONS HELP AIR, INC. WITH COMMUNITY WORK

AIR depends on individual contributions to support our work. We are a charitable 501(c)(3) organization and your contributions help fund such projects as campaign finance reform, and studies in racism and homelessness in Cincinnati. We invite you to assist us as AIR takes on new community issues and challenges. **You can now donate online at [www.airinc.org](http://www.airinc.org)**

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\$50

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**SAVE THE DATE**  
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**ANNUAL DINNER**  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2007**