



Betty Jo Mahan &lt;bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org&gt;

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**please vote yes to ban more billboards**

1 message

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**Margot Kline** <margotkline@gmail.com>  
To: bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org

Thu, Oct 11, 2012 at 12:14 AM

Dear MPC Commissioners,

Please vote yes to the proposed ban on NEW billboards and conversion of existing billboards to DIGITAL.

1. the proposed ban won't affect existing billboards
2. we have about 1,000 billboard "faces" in Knox County--enough already--and Lamar is WAY under-reporting how many they have, according to their own website--see attached *lamar\_stats.pdf*
3. banning new billboards would not affect jobs, whereas converting to digital would probably cut jobs... once a digital billboard is installed, most maintenance and all updating of the advertising messages is done by computer from a remote location
4. **converting to digital opens up a huge Pandora's Box of regulation issues...** due to First Amendment rights, billboard companies can't censor content unless it is legally considered obscene, and since digitals can be changed quickly and from out-of-state remote locations with the click of a mouse, we may be confronted with lots of offensive images with no off button and no parental controls. And if you don't think it can happen here, it HAS already happened in these places

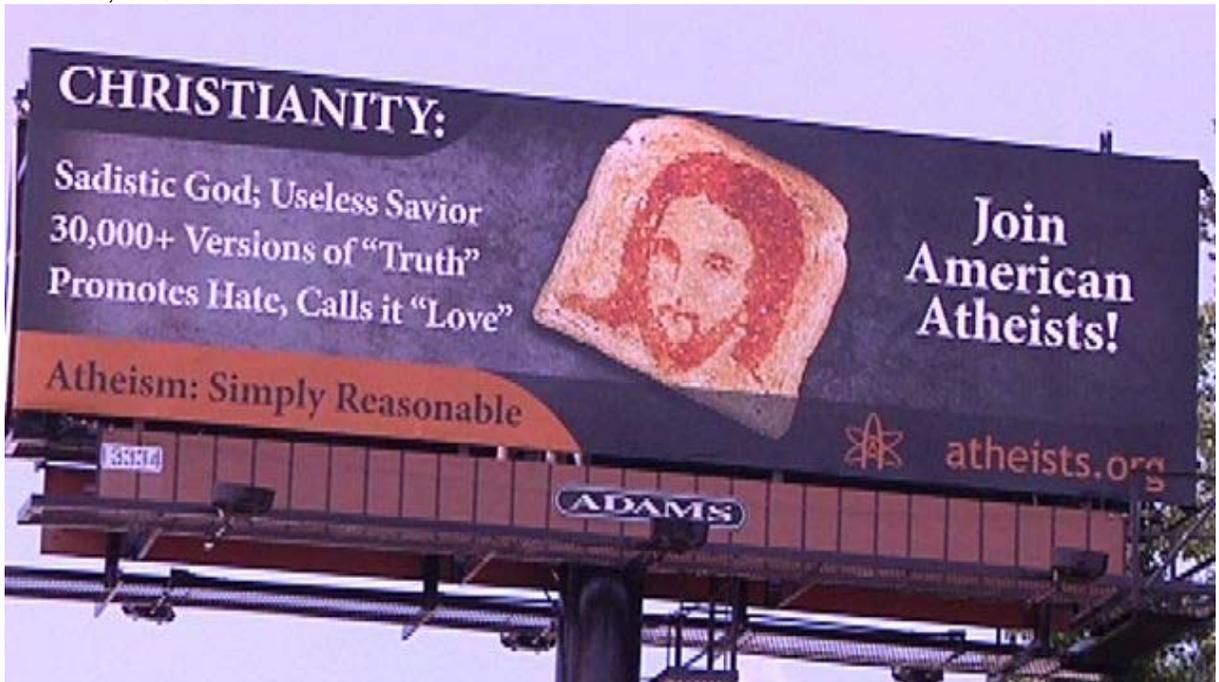
- Nashville, Tennessee:



- Clarksville, Tennessee:



- Charlotte, North Carolina:



- Kentucky and Cincinnati (20 billboards):



- Tulsa, Oklahoma



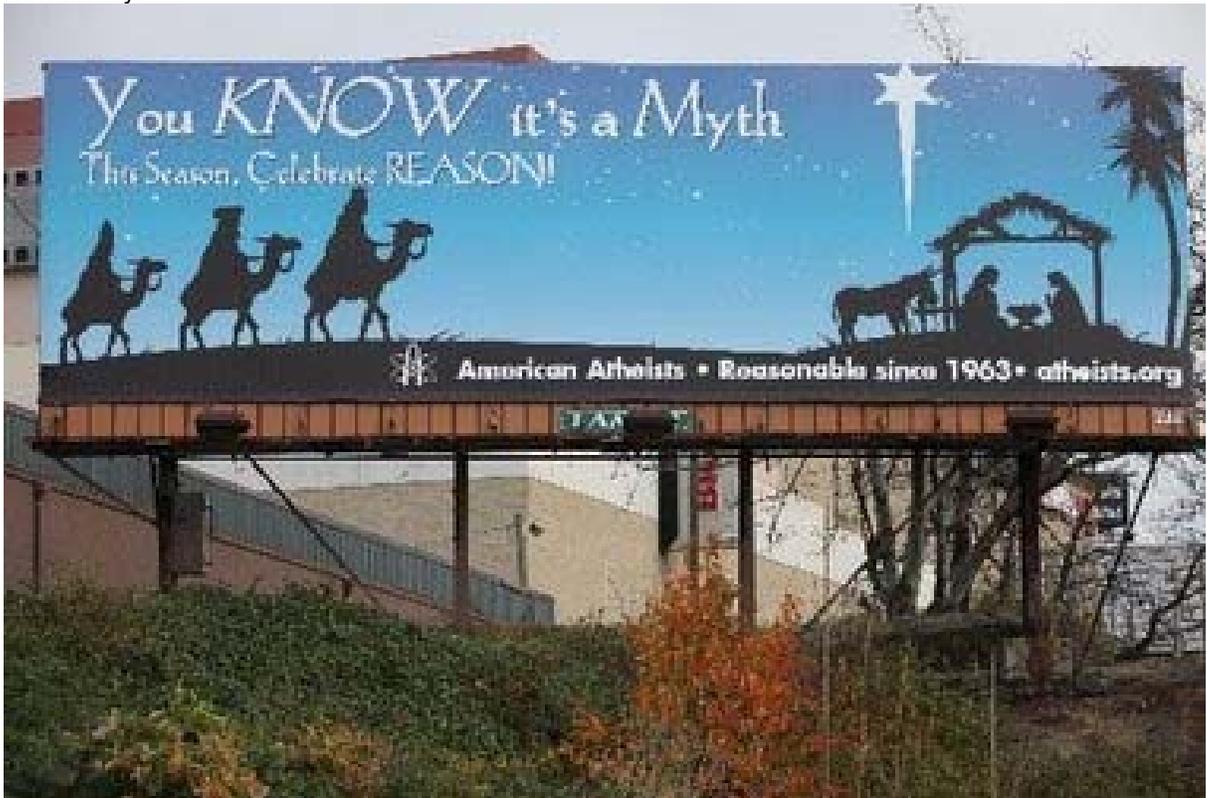
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:



- Atlanta, Georgia (50 billboards):



- New Jersey:



- Denver and Colorado Springs, Colorado (10 billboards)



- Texas:



- Mid Ohio:



- Tampa and St. Petersburg, Florida (20 billboards)



- New Jersey (19 billboards)



- Boise, Idaho:



- New Orleans, Louisiana (5 billboards)



- If those images don't bother you, how about these? Do you want to explain these to you kids or grandkids?



Project Publicity





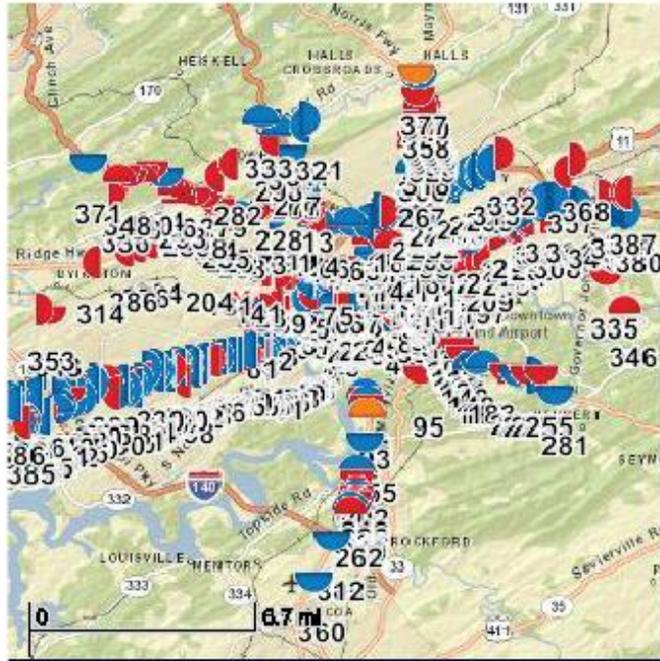
5. Lamar is NOT a local business. They are headquartered in Baton Rouge and have a fairly small workforce of 45-47 people here--and if their billboards go digital that workforce will shrink even more. Yes, Knox County gives them a lot of our money, but it doesn't all stay here!

Please see the *controversial\_billboard.pdf* attachment for more about the trouble with billboard regulation. Or just google [atheistbillboards.com](http://atheistbillboards.com)

Thank you,  
Margot Kline  
8845 Ebenezer Oaks Lane  
Knoxville, 37922

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- CREATIVE LAB
- PROGRAMS
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- SUPPORT

Use your outside voice.



## LOOK AT WHAT WE FOUND

We found 851 panels in 387 locations in a 10 mile radius of 4000 Kingston Pike. Please refer to the panel listing below the map to obtain detailed information about each panel. Click the 'View Rates' button below to see rates in this area:

[PRINT MAP](#) [VIEW RATES](#) [CONTACT ME](#) [BACK](#)

LEGEND

Click the blue panel numbers to view photosheets.

Map Icon	Panel	Distance	Location
1	10392	0.423	3417 SUTHERLAND AVENUE NS FE
1	10391	0.423	3417 SUTHERLAND AVENUE NS FW
2	11771	0.4759	3517 SUTHERLAND AVENUE NS FW
2	11772	0.4759	3517 SUTHERLAND AVENUE NS FE



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Production Related Questions:  
[Rachel Tempanaro](#)  
Phone: (800)952-3113

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**Kline, Margaret (Margot)**

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**Subject:** FW: billboards and our community

Dear Commissioners,

As you consider the question of billboard control and limiting conversion of static billboards to digital, please keep in mind that the billboard industry's representatives (mostly Lamar Advertising in this region) are NOT impartial and that their advice should be taken with a grain of salt. They are advertisers. Despite whatever good they may do by posting amber alerts or "Wanted by the Police" bulletins, they are not philanthropists or public service organizations... These are actual, unretouched billboards that Lamar has put up in the past year and a half:



**Outdoor advertisers must allow free speech or risk being sued. I'm not saying Lamar Advertising supports the sentiments on these billboards--but they CANNOT censor them. Do we really want Lamar executives or any other billboard companies making our decisions about how many billboards are enough or whether to allow more Jumbo-tron style digital billboards?**

These are tough questions that you, our elected leaders, must decide.

As for their policy of donating billboards to nonprofits or local law enforcement? Those are spaces that would otherwise be blank... a blank billboard is not good for a billboard company's business, so Lamar as well as other outdoor advertisers fill up their empty boards in exchange for the chance to say they do good things for the community (no doubt in recent years this has also been necessary to help overcome outrage over unpopular or offensive billboards) ... Plus, by providing a free billboard to a nonprofit, they gain the allegiance of the groups they are "giving" ad space to. Is that really charity?

Remember, billboard companies exist to sell you something... they are not philanthropies. They are based in Baton Rouge, Atlanta, New York, and San Antonio, and they most certainly are not driven by what is best for our community. Scroll to the end to read more about the "Manhunt" billboard shown above, and watch the video about Lamar's battling atheist/Christian billboards here:

<http://bcove.me/fw52x176>

or just take a look at many other Lamar billboards that have generated heated opposition from communities around the country (please understand that Lamar Advertising is acting out of the legal obligation to allow free speech, and every other billboard company posts similar boards):









Billboard companies represent every possible position:





**This one offended even Los Angeles residents, because it was placed within a block of a public elementary school:**

## ***"Manhunt Mobile Ad Featuring Two Men Kissing Upsets Parents"***

A new billboard for a gay dating and social networking website is causing controversy in Los Angeles, particularly among parents who feel the ad is simply too scintillating for their youngsters' eyes.



Shot by famed Spanish photographer JP Santamaria, the Manhunt ad -- used to promote a new component of the site exclusively for use on portable devices such as iPhones and iPads -- features two barechested male models in a sensual embrace.

Manhunt's Jason Harvey [acknowledged in a blog](#) that both the site itself and advertising agency Lamar Advertising received a flurry of complaints immediately after the new campaign premiered. A Lamar rep said that the agency went to great lengths to ensure no billboards featuring the photo were "not within 500 feet of schools, churches, playgrounds, etc."

The rep went on to note, "When we originally placed the units, we used our restriction codes that we have in our system for alcohol, to make sure that we were placing Manhunt in appropriate locations. Beyond that, we spent all day yesterday auditing each one of their locations to make sure that we didn't miss anything or that a school/pre-school hasn't popped up recently near one of their boards."

Area parents seem to feel differently. "It's not the blatant porn-iness of the over-lit image, or that it is of two men. It would be equally annoying if it were hetero," Kelly Cole, a self-described "liberal feminist" and mother of a fourth grader, [writes on Studio City Patch](#). "I know some would tell me to use the opportunity for an illuminating conversation. But I don't need Manhunt Mobile to set my Important Talks Agenda. Our family really could have gone awhile longer without that particular conversation—and

should've been able to do so."

Still, Harvey questions whether or not a similarly sexy ad for Michael Kors featuring a male and female model would've provoked the same level of outrage. "No, we don't have any evidence that there weren't any complaints to Michael Kors, his ad agency, or to L.A. political officials," he writes. "But we highly doubt that several media outlets approached them like they did us. Because, for some reason, gay sexuality is still scary and controversial for many people."



**This one also drew fire because it was placed in a residential area:**

## **Billboard Ad for San Fernando Valley Strip Club Draws Community Ire in Bel-Air**

Residents of one of L.A.'s most upscale communities are telling a major sign company that a billboard advertising a strip club more than a dozen miles away is unwelcome and should be removed from their neighborhood.

The Lamar Advertising billboard at Sepulveda Blvd. and Moraga Dr. in Bel-Air displays an ad for the "XPosed" Gentleman's Club on Canoga Ave. in the west San Fernando Valley. Lamar, a national billboard company with its headquarters in Baton Rouge, LA., owns an estimated 4,000 billboards in the city.

In an e-mail to Ray Baker, Lamar vice-president and general manager for the Los Angeles area, Bel-Air resident Helene Toomey wrote that the billboard is located at an intersection that is a main school bus pick-up and drop-off location for several neighborhood schools. Toomey said, "I am requesting that your company show some consideration for upholding the decency of our neighborhoods and display your pornographic ads in more suitable locations, instead of contributing to the degradation of our upscale residential neighborhoods."

In an e-mail response, Baker said, "We take, very seriously, our commitments to our advertisers and their First Amendment right to free speech. With that being said, we agree that some discretion must be observed with the communities that we operate."

Baker attached a copy of Lamar's "Advertising Copy Acceptance Policy" which says the following :

*Lamar will accept copy for a sexually-oriented business (SOB) with the following guidelines:*

*-Lamar's local General Manager, in consultation with the Regional Manager, will decide which areas within his/her market are appropriate for SOB ads.*

*-No photographs or silhouettes will be accepted except tasteful head shots.*

*-Written copy must not be offensive.*

*-No SOB copy will be accepted near churches, schools or other such places.*

*-Regional Managers may impose stricter guidelines on the acceptance of SOB copy.*

*-Less restrictive guidelines apply in Las Vegas, NV and Times Square, NY.*

Last year, a Lamar billboard for the same strip club [generated similar complaints from residents of Westwood Village](#). The company's billboards have also displayed ads for the strip club in other parts of L.A.'s westside, including Venice and West L.A.

by **Dennis Hathaway**

March 15th, 2012 Posted to [Billboards,Featured,Lamar Advertising](#)