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Rawlings owner is Oldham donor

City, county each received \$100,000

By Andrea Uhde

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The owner of The Rawlings Group, Oldham County's largest private employer, was the anonymous donor of \$100,000 to both the city of La Grange and the county, according to a news release sent to The Courier-Journal last night.

George Rawlings, who moved his company to La Grange from downtown Louisville last year, said in the release that he wanted "to give something back to my fellow citizens here."

"I have asked for no special treatment just normal help in problem solving and everyone I have dealt with has been helpful," he said in the release, which was issued by La Grange Mayor Elsie Carter and Oldham Judge-Executive Duane Murner.

Three lawsuits have been filed in Oldham Circuit Court asking for the identity of the donor, who officials refused to identify until yesterday, citing an exception to the Kentucky Open Records Act.

Oldham Magistrate Scott Davis sued both Murner and Fiscal Court, and the city of La Grange and Buckner resident Dewey Wotring filed a lawsuit against Murner. In interviews, the two both have said they wanted to make sure the donor wasn't someone seeking favors from local government.

"Both the City of La Grange and the County of Oldham have each sought to protect the giver's identity," the release said. "... After discussion of lawsuits and opinion letters and the amount of time being taken up and therefore the cost that time represents to both the city and county, the gift giver is waiving his right to remain anonymous and is revealing himself."

The Rawlings Group analyzes and summarizes electronic data and handles claims-recovery services for the health-care industry. It has 550 employees in its 156,000-square-foot headquarters off New Moody Lane in La Grange.

In interviews last night, both Davis and Wotring said they suspected Rawlings could be the donor.

"His name did definitely come to mind as someone who would have a deep tie with both the county and the city," Davis said.

He said he's not questioning Rawlings' intentions, but knowing the identity of the donor "gives us a good opportunity to go back and look at what has happened, and definitely puts us on notice for the future."

Wotring said the release of the name was "long overdue."

"I'm glad they've decided to do this," he said, adding that he plans to look at the dealings the city and county have had with The Rawlings Group in the past.

"I will be looking to see if there are any dealings that I think are not above board," he said. "If it's all above board, I congratulate (Rawlings) for that."

When reached by phone last night, Rawlings said he felt the release spoke for itself.

In the release, Rawlings said his faith tells him it is wrong to seek glory for giving gifts.

He said that since moving his company to Oldham County, he has "received nothing but helpful assistance in dealing with the day-to-day matters which can make running a business and moving a business trying."

He said he felt the anonymous donations were the best way to give back to the community.

Murner said the gift was given long after Rawlings made the decision to come.

"He's just that kind of guy; he never calls and asks for favors."

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