

ANNUAL REPORT

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT



2024
FISCAL YEAR



Department of
Development

*At the Ohio Department
of Development, we are
empowering communities
to succeed.*

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Cover photo:
Cyclists ride along the boardwalk at Summit Lake Metropark in Akron

From Director Lydia Mihalik



At the Ohio Department of Development, we're driven by the unwavering belief that our work is an investment in the dreams of every Ohioan.

Inspired by the vision of Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and through our partnerships with Ohio's General Assembly, state agencies, local governments, and businesses, Development is transforming Ohio—one community, one project, one family, and one dream at a time.

Over the past year, I have had the incredible honor of visiting places all across our state, meeting one-on-one with our local partners, and learning about the hopes and dreams of people who call Ohio home. I have been inspired to see how those ambitions of progress turned into reality through a powerful combination of targeted investments, financial support, technical assistance, and impactful marketing.

For many Ohioans, owning their own business is the ultimate sign they've achieved "the American Dream." And, at Development, we are dedicated to nurturing this dream by providing small business owners access to funds, mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and pathways to new and emerging markets.

Our support ensures every aspiring entrepreneur, regardless of background, has the tools and resources to bring their vision to life and create a legacy they can be proud of. This commitment not only fuels job creation and economic growth but also ignites a passion that diversifies and strengthens our communities.

But our communities are only as strong as their foundation, and that is why we've spent much of the last year building on our commitment to revitalizing neighborhoods, enhancing critical infrastructure, and meeting families at their most significant points of need. From rebuilding waterlines and lowering energy bills to remediating toxic lead and expanding Ohio's housing stock, we're giving communities a chance to rewrite their story, and providing places for new dreams to grow.

Thanks to our efforts to expand high-speed internet across the state, more Ohioans than ever before can now access essential services like telehealth, higher education, and remote work, bridging the digital divide and creating new opportunities for growth and success.

In Appalachia, dreams are only the beginning. For generations, Ohioans of this great region have turned big dreams into even bigger realities, building industries, forging communities, and carving out a legacy of resilience and innovation that has defined Ohio. This year was anchored by an unprecedented investment in Ohio's 32-county Appalachian region, supporting initiatives to revitalize downtowns and waterfronts, boost children's healthcare, and recapture the pioneer spirit of the people who helped build this great state. These projects are breathing new life into some of our oldest communities and driving generational change throughout Ohio.



Governor DeWine, Lt. Governor Husted, Director Mihalik, and JobOhio CEO J.P. Nauseef pose for a photo with Joby Aviation leadership following the historic announcement made in September 2023.

Tourism is a cornerstone of our thriving economy, driving powerful investments and showcasing a unique charm you can't find anywhere else. Whether it's a weekend getaway exploring the vibrant arts scene in Downtown Cleveland, Sunday breakfast at the Historic Clifton Mill, or an adventurous hike to the top of Christmas Rocks, every trip to any one of Ohio's wonderful destinations strengthens our communities, fuels local businesses, and helps families from near and far turn dreams into memories that will last a lifetime.

From the shores and islands of Lake Erie to the Ohio River, the Ohio you see today is the strongest it has ever been. I can't wait to see what the coming year will bring as we seek to build the brightest futures for everyone who calls this great state home.

As this annual report vibrantly illustrates, everyone—regardless of whether they're from one of our charming small towns or villages, one of our nationally recognized micropolitans, or an energetic big city—can achieve their dreams and have it all in Ohio, The Heart of it All.

Sincerely,

Lydia L. Mihalik
Director

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

A man in a blue shirt and a young girl in a red and white striped shirt are standing on a sidewalk in front of a house. The house has a grey roof and white siding. There are trees and bushes in the background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

The Department of Development is committed to addressing the critical needs of Ohioans through our Community Services Division. By enhancing local infrastructure, revitalizing downtown areas, and fostering a supportive environment for entrepreneurship and job creation, the division is making a significant impact on communities across the state. Key initiatives such as the Home Energy Assistance Program, the Percentage of Income Payment Plan, and the Home Weatherization Assistance Program are integral to improving the quality of life for all Ohioans.

METRICS

that matter



\$13.8M

IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS AWARDED TO ASSIST WITH PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LOW- AND-MODERATE INCOME OHIOANS IN 22 COMMUNITIES



\$95M

AWARDED TO SUPPORT LEAD MITIGATION AND PREVENTION PROJECTS ACROSS 78 COUNTIES



3,000+

CONTRACTORS STATEWIDE TRAINED IN LEAD REMEDIATION THROUGH LEAD SAFE OHIO PROGRAM



166

PROJECTS AWARDED THROUGH OHIO BUILDS WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

90 projects: July 2023
76 projects: May 2024



122,324

HOUSEHOLDS SERVED THROUGH WINTER (77,828) AND SUMMER (44,496) CRISIS PROGRAMS



5,120

OHIOANS RECEIVED HOME WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE



\$29.5M

IN WELCOME HOME OHIO FUNDS AWARDED TO IMPROVE THE HOUSING STOCK IN 17 COUNTIES



37,286

PEOPLE PROVIDED EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSISTANCE THROUGH HOMELESS CRISIS RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM



\$8M

IN GRANTS ALLOCATED TO MUNICIPALITIES, BUSINESSES, NONPROFITS, SCHOOLS IN 18 COUNTIES TO SUPPORT ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS

Investments in Healthy, Stable Housing Pave Bright Future for Ohio Families

Under the leadership of the DeWine-Husted Administration, Development made significant strides toward improving and expanding the state's housing stock in Fiscal Year 2024 through a series of new and legacy programs designed to create healthier, safer homes for all Ohioans.

Central to these efforts was the **Welcome Home Ohio program**, through which nearly \$29.5 million was awarded on June 3 to support the creation of 263 single-family homes across 17 counties. This investment is part of a larger \$100 million commitment over two years, aimed at helping landbanks purchase, rehabilitate, or build residential properties for income-eligible residents. In addition to grants, \$50 million in nonrefundable tax credits is available to landbanks and developers to further incentivize rehabilitation and new construction projects, ensuring that more Ohio families have access to quality, affordable housing.



Gov. DeWine announced solutions to helping Ohioans achieve homeownership during his 2023 State of the State Address



\$29.5M

AWARDED



263

HOMES



17

COUNTIES



“

“Homeownership has long been a fundamental part of the ‘American Dream,’ but that dream is often too far out of reach for many people to achieve. With Welcome Home Ohio funding, we’re rewriting that narrative and creating real opportunities for all Ohioans, regardless of their income, to experience the joy of having a home they can call their own.”

—Director Lydia Mihalik

New Program Aims to Create Lead Safe Ohio

Since launching in May 2023, the new Lead Safe Ohio program has made a significant impact on the future of public health through localized workforce development efforts aimed at removing toxic lead from homes across the state.

The Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD), for example, has provided lead mitigation training to more than 500 students so far—empowering Ohio’s contractors to expand their services and expertise, and ultimately contributing to safer, healthier homes. By reaching contractors outside of its traditional network of weatherization providers, COAD has been able to leverage Lead Safe Ohio by extending the benefits of lead remediation to a broader section of the industry.



Lead mitigation training in Athens, Ohio

Rebuilding Lives in Dayton



16

**HOMES
REBUILT**

Building on last year’s successes, Development played a crucial role in helping even more Ohioans rebuild their lives after the lasting damage caused by the 2019 Memorial Day tornadoes. Through partnerships with organizations like County Corp, YouthBuild/AmeriCorps, and Montgomery County, Development leveraged the first Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds awarded to Ohio in more than two decades to rebuild 16 homes in the Fairview Neighborhood of Dayton. These homes represent more than just a place to live; for many, they signify the achievement of homeownership for the first time.

\$1 Million Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant Helps Former Mining Community Reinvent Itself

Chauncey is a former mining town that is now reimagining itself as a hub for outdoor recreation. The community faces significant economic challenges, a high poverty rate among its residents, and a need for costly infrastructure improvements to pave the way for future development plans. As part of the fifth round of the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant program, Chauncey was awarded a \$1 million grant to complete a long-overdue project crucial to the village’s revitalization efforts – a complete sewer line replacement. This project will not only ensure a healthy and safe environment for residents, but it will also ensure the village has the infrastructure to support economic growth.



Since its inception, the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant program has provided nearly \$620 million to support hundreds of local water projects across all 88 counties.



“Without the funding we’ve received, this project would not be possible as our local government feels very passionate about not adding more financial burden to our residents than what they are already currently facing.”

**—Amy Renner,
Mayor of Chauncey**



Director Mihalik speaks at a groundbreaking event for infrastructure improvements in the Village of Chauncey

Development Support Helps Lorain Shelter Reopen After Flooding



In August 2023, the Neighborhood Alliance Shelter in Lorain experienced severe flooding due to significant rainfall, which overwhelmed the city's stormwater system. The flooding caused nearly two feet of water and sewage to back up through the drains in four locations on the shelter's first floor, impacting the kitchen, dining room, laundry facilities, and utilities.



Following the flooding, Lorain County sought assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. However, the countywide damage did not meet the criteria for a federal emergency declaration. With insurance not fully covering the clean-up costs, the shelter administration utilized local funding and resources to arrange hotel stays for their occupants while applying for state funding through Development.

On Sept. 1, 2023, Development awarded the shelter \$127,700 from the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. This funding facilitated water removal, restoration, and essential repairs to the facility. Thanks to these efforts, residents were able to return to a fully restored shelter by Nov. 13, 2023.



Yearly Program Helps Reach Ohioans Struggling with Home Energy Costs

Every year, Development works with Community Action Agencies across the state to make a profound impact on the lives of tens of thousands of Ohioans through the Home Energy Assistance Program Summer and Winter Crisis programs.

These programs provide a one-time benefit to income-eligible Ohioans to assist with heating or cooling their homes through equipment repairs or replacements, or by helping cover the cost of their utility bills. In FY24 alone, Development helped serve 122,324 households throughout Ohio – ensuring 77,828 households received relief from harsh winter conditions and 44,496 households stayed cool during the sweltering summer months.



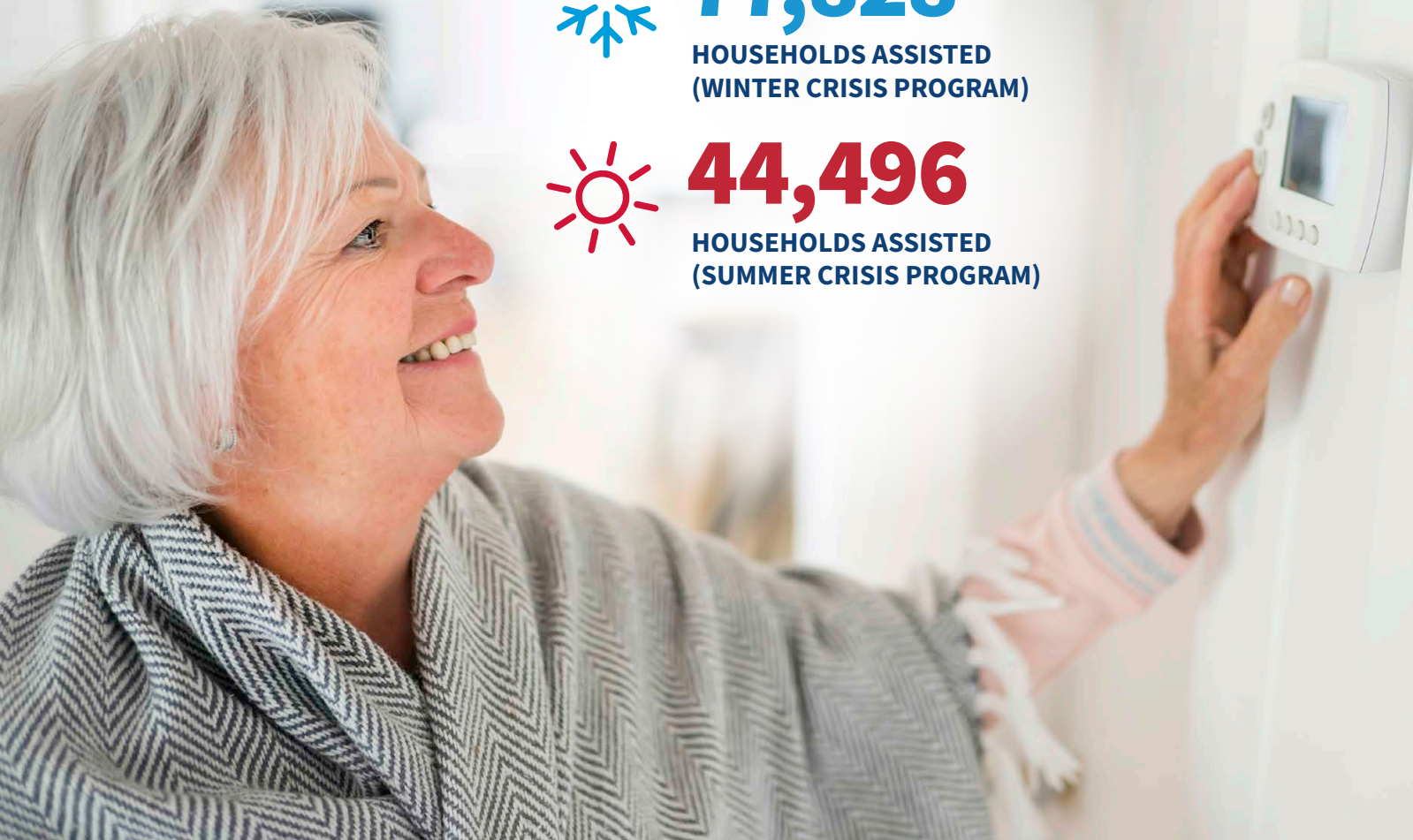
77,828

HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED
(WINTER CRISIS PROGRAM)



44,496

HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED
(SUMMER CRISIS PROGRAM)





TRANSFORMING OHIO'S APPALACHIAN REGION

The Governor's Office of Appalachia focuses on the development of Ohio's 32-county Appalachian region. Stretching along Ohio's eastern and southern borders, the region covers more than 39 percent of the state. Funded by both federal dollars from the Appalachian Regional Commission, and state funding, the goal of the Governor's Office of Appalachia is to transform the area through initiatives that enhance communities, increase prosperity, and respond to the region's biggest challenges.

METRICS

that matter



\$33M

IN STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING
TO APPALACHIAN COUNTIES



85

TOTAL PROJECTS FUNDED



46

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECTS FUNDED



4

DISTRESSED
COUNTIES



\$422M

IN GRANTS THROUGH THE
APPALACHIAN COMMUNITY
GRANT PROGRAM

\$64M

Children's Health Initiative

\$154M

Downtowns and Destinations Initiative

\$204M

Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative



Appalachian Community Grant Program

Thanks to the support of the Ohio General Assembly, Governor DeWine facilitated a long-overdue, comprehensive, and unprecedented investment in the Appalachian region of Ohio to enhance quality of life, help rebuild economies, and revitalize the communities.

In June 2022, Governor DeWine signed House Bill 377, creating what has become known as the **Appalachian Community Grant Program**.

This program allocates \$500 million from Ohio's designation of the American Rescue Plan Act to support transformational projects in the region. The Governor's Office of Appalachia is responsible for the administration of the program and is leveraging relationships with federal, state, and local partners to maximize the long-term impact of these funds.

Awarded during FY23, the initial round included four shovel-ready projects that received a combined \$50 million. The state also allocated \$30 million in planning and technical assistance funds to help communities prepare their projects and applications for the second round of funding.

\$422 Million in Awards Announced

During FY24, Governor DeWine, Lt. Governor Husted, Director Mihalik, and Governor's Office of Appalachia Director John Carey made four rounds of announcements across the 32-county region. Announcements totaled \$422 million and included funding for the Appalachian Children's Health Initiative (\$64M), the Appalachian Downtowns and Destinations Initiative (\$154M), and the Wonderful Waterways Initiative (\$204M).



Governor DeWine in Vinton County, Ohio

Appalachian Community Grant Program



OHIO'S WONDERFUL WATERFRONTS INITIATIVE



APPALACHIAN DOWNTOWNS & DESTINATIONS INITIATIVE



APPALACHIAN CHILDREN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

● Previous Projects Funded in March 2023



“Our vision for Ohio’s future is one where all Ohioans, no matter where they are from, have the opportunity to live up to their full potential.”

—Gov. Mike DeWine

Children's Health Initiative



In March 2024, Governor DeWine announced a \$64 million award in support of the Appalachian Children's Health Initiative which will create or expand community- and school-based health clinics, launch healthcare-focused workforce development programs, and improve the access to vital health services across the region.

The funding will support 28 projects expected to impact a staggering 61,000 students and 375,000 residents across 20 Appalachian counties. Partners included 34 school districts, a career technical school, an educational service center, and 16 healthcare partners. The expanded services will include comprehensive primary care, dental, vision, and mental health services for children, families, and communities.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

\$64M
IN GRANTS

20 COUNTIES SERVED

16 HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

34 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

36 COMMUNITIES

61,000
STUDENTS SERVED

ESTIMATED TO REACH

375,000

PEOPLE IN APPALACHIAN OHIO



SUCCESS STORY

Campbell Schools

At Campbell City Schools, students and community members will soon benefit from more than just a quality education. **The school district is receiving \$10 million to construct a new, 55,000-square-foot facility to provide a comprehensive array of programs.** These include an on-site food pantry, greenhouse, composting facility, healthcare services (including both on-site and via telehealth), childcare, workforce services, and medical education programming.

This initiative builds on the vision of Superintendent Matt Bowen, who has been instrumental in creating, operating, and maintaining similar community assets. With the goal of enhancing holistic community health, Bowen and the district have collaborated with various community partners to integrate career credentials with higher education opportunities.

The new center will complement existing services at the adjacent Community Literacy Workforce and Cultural Center and the Northeast Ohio IMPACT Academy, focusing on improving social determinants of health for the entire community.



Campbell City Schools Superintendent Matt Bowen

SUCCESS STORY

East Central Ohio Educational Service Center

Rural healthcare providers face significant challenges to establishing and maintaining operations, including recruitment and retention issues, financial challenges, and lack of infrastructure and resources. As a result, limited health and wellness services force families to drive long distances to receive care. The East Central Ohio Educational Service Center (ECOESC) helps to fill the healthcare gap, serving more than 20 school districts and reaching more than 27,000 students from communities in five counties.

With a \$3 million grant from the Appalachian Children's Health Initiative, ECOESC plans to expand its services at a new location in St. Clairsville, creating a regional hub for increased access to healthcare services and workforce development programming for students, families, and adult residents of Belmont and surrounding counties. In partnership with the Ohio Hills Health Center, ECOESC will provide both primary care and dental services, including one health care provider and one licensed practical nurse or medical assistant, one dentist, one dental hygienist, and one dental assistant, providing a local, accessible option for healthcare for students and residents alike.

Wonderful Waterfronts

The Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative takes advantage of the natural beauty of Appalachia Ohio, transforming local waterways into vibrant destinations for tourists and locals alike. Enhancing the scenic riverfronts not only boosts the local economy but also promotes outdoor activities such as boating, fishing, and hiking, allowing residents and visitors to fully appreciate and enjoy the region's stunning landscapes.

More than \$152 million was awarded to communities in 12 counties to expand access to local waterways, revitalize historic riverfront downtowns, and create new tourism and recreational opportunities. Projects include outdoor infrastructure, new river-to-downtown connections, downtown redevelopment and streetscape improvements, boat ramps, docks, and parks.

WONDERFUL WATERFRONTS

\$204M
IN GRANTS

39 PROJECTS

37 COMMUNITIES

20 COUNTIES

25 WATERFRONT
RECREATION PROJECTS

8 DOWNTOWN DISTRICT
TRANSFORMATIONS

5 IMPROVED RECREATION
TRAIL NETWORKS

Riverfront communities receiving funding include:

Beverly, Burlington, Gallipolis, Higginsport, Ironton (2), Marietta, McConnelsville, Middleport, New Richmond, Portsmouth, Proctorville, Racine, Ripley, Sardis, South Point, and Zanesville.

Other projects included downtown revitalizations in Caldwell and New Philadelphia.

“

“When people come to Ohio (from the south), we are the very first thing visitors see. As they say, impressions can make or break an experience for people.”

—Nate Welcome, Executive Director
Scioto County Convention and Visitors Bureau

SUCCESS STORY

Portsmouth

The Portsmouth Riverfront will improve access to the Ohio River and amplify the tourism and recreation in the city. **With a \$34 million grant from the Appalachian Community Grant Program, the city of Portsmouth’s riverfront will be redeveloped to include outdoor parks, recreational amenities along the river, riverfront murals, an amphitheater, improved walking paths, and the installation of a fishing pier, and campsites.**



These revitalization efforts will make downtown more walkable, better connect the community to the river, and enrich the experiences at popular festivals like Portsmouth River Days and Winterfest. This blend of modern amenities and historical context promises to make the Portsmouth riverfront a vibrant and attractive destination for both residents and tourists.

“We’re told by people in local communities that ‘We’d like to do more with the river. We would like for it to be more of the community. We’d like to have an opportunity to really get more tourists to come to this area, but also for our own people to really, really use the river,’” Governor DeWine told WOWK. “It’s their ideas. It’s their vision, and they’re the ones who know best, and they’re the ones who, with this money, are now going to be able to really transform Portsmouth.”

SUCCESS STORY

Higginsport

On the banks of the Ohio River, just 40 miles east of Cincinnati, sits an abandoned ballfield in the village of Higginsport. With a population of just over 200 people, the village has historically lacked the resources to make improvements and, despite its location on the river, has no public access for water recreation.

With a \$6.3 million grant through Ohio’s Wonderful Waterfront’s Initiative, the village will redevelop the ballfield and surrounding land into a seven-acre community park. The park will create a public gathering space for the community in addition to a boat dock and launch for water access for residents and visitors alike. Additional improvements include the construction of a fishing pier, bridge and a mural at the new park.

Downtowns and Destinations



The Appalachian Downtowns and Destinations Initiative focuses on revitalizing historic downtown districts, creating new recreation opportunities, and enhancing the experience for visitors to the region's cultural sites.

With an investment of \$154 million across 12 counties, the initiative focuses on improving infrastructure at parks, trails, and museums, supporting enhancements to historical landmarks, renovating downtown spaces and main streets, and establishing new hubs for education, economic development, healthcare, and community engagement. Communities such as Chauncey, Georgetown, Jackson, and Logan are among those benefiting from the initiative.

DOWNTOWNS & DESTINATIONS

\$154M
IN GRANTS

30 PROJECTS

26 COMMUNITIES

12 COUNTIES SERVED

11 HISTORIC SITES

12 TRANSFORMED
DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

SUCCESS STORY

Logan

Hocking Hills State Park, known for its stunning natural beauty with waterfalls, caves, and hiking trails, is a beloved destination attracting millions of visitors each year. The \$14 million Gateway to Hocking Hills project aims to transform downtown Logan into a vibrant and welcoming corridor for park visitors, while also creating a more walkable and livable downtown for residents.

This transformative project will fund various enhancements, including new signage, archways, improved landscaping, and decorative intersections. Main Street, between High and Orchard Streets, will be converted into a "complete street," reorganizing surface parking to accommodate wider sidewalks and a shared-use path, significantly improving pedestrian safety. Additionally, new lighting will be installed to enhance the visual appeal and safety of the downtown district.

SUCCESS STORY

Chillicothe

Chillicothe's Yoctangee Riverside District will undergo a complete transformation to support its growing tourist population with a \$35 million grant through the program.

These comprehensive projects aim to significantly enhance the Yoctangee Riverside District, making it a more vibrant and accessible area for both residents and visitors.

The project includes restoring the city's underutilized armory into the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Visitors' Center. On Sept. 19, UNESCO World Heritage Committee issued their decision to inscribe Ohio's Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks as the United States' 25th addition to the World Heritage List.

The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, which include five locations managed by the National Park Service and three managed by the Ohio History Connection, were built by Native Americans between 1,600 and 2,000 years ago. They are complex masterpieces of landscape architecture and are exceptional among ancient monuments worldwide in their enormous scale, geometric precision and astronomical alignments.

“We’ve been daydreaming for a couple of years. Today we get to celebrate and then tomorrow the hard work begins.” – Chillicothe Mayor Luke Feeny

In addition to the visitors' center, the project includes the construction of a nearby pavilion to host year-round farmers' markets, which will bolster the local economy and provide a venue for community gatherings. Renovations and expansions to the Mighty Children's Museum will enhance its educational offerings and attract more families to the area. The park's recreational fields will see major improvements, including the construction of an amphitheater for outdoor performances, pickleball courts, and the refurbishment of the baseball field, creating a dynamic space for both recreational and cultural activities.



Chillicothe project rendering

EMPOWERING OHIO'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY

An aerial photograph of a tarmac with yellow ground markings. A white drone is positioned on the right side of the frame, casting a shadow. The background is a vast, flat concrete surface under bright sunlight.

The Strategic Investments Division supports the development of Ohio's business community by assisting companies as they maneuver through the global economy. Whether it's involving an established company looking to expand, a newly established small business seeking to take the next step, or an aspiring entrepreneur, we are helping to create prosperity across the state through our many programs and projects.

METRICS

that matter

TAX CREDITS



\$30B

PROJECT INVESTMENTS CATALYZED
by tax credit investments

13,700

NEW JOBS CREATED*
**based on company commitments*

21,500

JOBS RETAINED*

\$424M

CAPITAL INVESTMENT
*by investors through Ohio Qualified Opportunity Zone
Funds in 168 projects*

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE



\$1.6B

TO APEX
ACCELERATOR
CLIENTS

\$153M

IN CAPITAL ACCESSED
BY BUSINESS THROUGH
SMALL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

11,665

CLIENTS SERVED THROUGH SBDC

53,013

HOURS OF NO-COST
BUSINESS ADVISING
TO SMALL BUSINESSES

\$164M+

EXPANDED BUSINESS
SALES



Flying High—Joby Aviation, Inc.



In September 2023, Governor DeWine, Lt. Governor Husted, and Director Mihalik joined Joby Aviation Inc. to announce the groundbreaking for a new electric air taxi manufacturing facility at Dayton International Airport.

Supported by a 2.055 percent 30-year Job Creation Tax Credit approved by the Ohio Tax Credit Authority, this facility will enable Joby Aviation to construct a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant capable of producing up to 500 aircraft annually. The project anticipates creating 2,000 full-time jobs, with an estimated annual payroll impact of \$140 million.

Joby Aviation's investment in Ohio is expected to create substantial economic growth, both regionally and nationally. The new facility likely will draw other advanced air mobility opportunities to Ohio, causing a ripple effect that could lead to an overall \$13 billion economic impact statewide and the creation of 15,000 new jobs across the state by 2045. According to Morgan Stanley, the global economic impact is projected to be \$9 trillion by 2050.

The new assembly-line manufacturing facility will specialize in all-electric, vertical take-off, and landing (eVTOL) air taxis designed primarily for commercial passenger operations. Capable of speeds up to 200 miles per hour and covering distances of 100 miles, the aircraft will accommodate a pilot and four passengers.

Job Creation Tax Credit

The Job Creation Tax Credit is a refundable and performance-based tax credit calculated as a percent of created payroll and applied toward the company's commercial activity tax liability. The program helps incentivize job creation and investment in Ohio.

■ **WORLDPAY**

Worldpay, a leading global provider of payment processing solutions with over 30 years of experience in supporting global commerce, is relocating its world headquarters to Cincinnati. This move is set to bring over 500 new jobs and \$56 million in payroll to southwest Ohio, while also ensuring the retention of more than 900 current positions.

■ **SHEETZ**

Sheetz, Inc., a chain of convenience stores and coffee shops, will construct a new \$150 million facility in Findlay. This project is expected to create 750 jobs over five years as the company prepares to reach new markets across Ohio and the Midwest.

■ **LOUIS DREYFUS**

Louis Dreyfus Company, a global leader in agricultural goods trading and processing, will build a new plant in Wyandot County. This expansion is expected to generate 114 new jobs and inject \$541 million into the local economy, reinforcing growth in the crucial food and agricultural sectors.

■ **SCHAEFFLER**

A pioneering force in the field of motion technology, Schaeffler will build a new manufacturing facility in Dover. Schaeffler, which currently operates a manufacturing facility in Wooster and an automotive aftermarket operation in Strongsville, is bringing 650 jobs and \$54 million in associated payroll to Wayne and Tuscarawas counties through this expansion.

\$27.6B
**IN FIXED-ASSET
INVESTMENTS**

Through the Job Creation Tax Credit program, \$27.6 billion in fixed-asset investment is expected across Ohio through 65 projects. This number includes three projects with over a billion dollars in investment each.

Revitalizing Ohio's Communities

The Transformational Mixed-Use Development Program provides a tax credit to offset costs incurred during the construction of a project that will be a catalyst for future development in its area.

Eligible applicants are divided based on location of a development into a “major city” group, which is for projects located either within a major city or within a 10-mile radius of a corporate boundary of a city, or a “general” group for other projects. New construction, and/or improvements of vacant buildings that will have a major economic impact on the site and the surrounding area, are eligible for support through the program.

\$2.6B

IN TOTAL ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENTS EXPECTED ACROSS OHIO SPURRED BY 15 TRANSFORMATIONAL MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

■ THE SILOS

The Silos project in Marysville will transform a neglected 14-acre brownfield site using an \$8 million tax credit, revitalizing it into a vibrant mixed-use development. Located just north of downtown Marysville, the area formerly housed the Marysville Water Treatment Plant, a scrap yard, and iconic grain silos.



The project includes the construction of three new multifamily buildings with approximately 200 residential units totaling 360,000 square feet; the restoration of the existing Marysville Water Treatment Plant into 12,000 square feet of new office and hospitality space; the construction of a new 26,000 square-foot mixed-use building containing a restaurant, event space, bar-arcade, and outdoor gathering areas; and, the repurposing of the historic Heritage Grain Silos into 112,000 square feet of inviting hospitality venues, outdoor gathering spaces, and a versatile event destination. The project also proposes a multi-use trail that connects to the greater trail network in the city and a pedestrian bridge to connect the adjacent multiuse trail system. The project is expected to result in approximately 150 construction jobs and 260 permanent jobs at the project site.



PLAYHOUSE SQUARE

Located in downtown Cleveland, Playhouse Square stands as the largest performing arts center in the United States outside of New York City. **Recognized as the “world’s largest theater restoration” project, it is set to receive a \$1.95 million Transformational Mixed-Use Development tax credit.**

This funding will facilitate the restoration of the Bulkley Building, Idea Center, and 1317 Euclid Ave. buildings, alongside the construction of the Lumen—a 600,000 square-foot residential housing and parking facility.



Cleveland reporters interview Director Mihalik and Playhouse Square CEO Craig Hassall. TMUD funding is helping transform the space into new apartments.

The tax credit aims to preserve and enhance one of the region’s premier tourism assets, promising to generate 699 construction jobs and create 525 permanent jobs onsite. Originally built in the 1920s, Playhouse Square’s five original venues faced closure in the 1970s. A grassroots initiative saved these historic theaters, catalyzing downtown revitalization. Today, Playhouse Square boasts 11 performance spaces, symbolizing its pivotal role in Cleveland’s cultural landscape.



Preserving Ohio's Historic Spaces

The Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program provides a tax credit for the private redevelopment of historic buildings.

This competitive program which receives applications bi-annually provides a state tax credit up to 25 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures incurred during a project, up to \$5 million. The tax credit can be applied to financial institutions, foreign and domestic insurance premiums, or individual income taxes, and owners and long-term lessees of historically designated buildings who undertake a rehabilitation project may apply.

THE ELECTRIC BUILDING

Doug Price III and Karen Fanger are no strangers to historic preservation projects. Their development firm has been preserving buildings in downtown Cleveland since 2007 when their first historic project, the former William Taylor & Sons Department Store, was awarded tax credits in the first round of the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program. Since then, they've received seven other historic tax credits, primarily restored into housing in downtown Cleveland.



(Berardi/K&D Group)

A rendering shows the restored exterior of the Electric Building in Cleveland

Their latest endeavor, the Electric Building, continues this legacy. Dating back to circa 1900, the building will undergo restoration to create 120 market-rate residential apartments, complemented by office space and a sports bar on the main floor. **Supported by a \$4,050,000 tax credit from Development, this project aims to preserve the building's historical character while expanding housing options in the heart of Cleveland.**

STEUBENVILLE GROCERY BOX

Built in the 1880s, the McCauslen's Florists Building, located in downtown Steubenville, previously housed one of the oldest businesses in the state. The buildings' upper floors have long been underutilized or vacant and have since fallen into disrepair.

But the buildings may live to see another hundred years, thanks to the Demary and Barnes families. Marc and Maura Barnes and Greg and Emily Demary are not only undertaking the historic restoration of the buildings, but they operate their own grocery store, the Steubenville Grocery Box. The store is meeting a major need in downtown Steubenville—eliminating a food desert while also providing farmers and producers with a place to sell their goods.

With the help of a \$130,192 historic tax credit, the Barnes and Demary families plan to restore the buildings to their former glory, maintaining the first-floor commercial spaces and existing artist studios and rehabilitating the upper two floors into residential units for much-needed downtown housing.



Director Mihalik with the owners of the Steubenville Grocery Box

\$1.6B

IS EXPECTED IN QUALIFIED REHABILITATION INVESTMENTS SPURRED BY 94 HISTORIC PROJECTS

The Heart of Innovation

The Ohio Innovation Hub program is a \$125 million initiative to establish industry-focused centers of work and learning, creating unique ecosystems of researchers, entrepreneurs, and public-private partnerships to create innovative solutions. The hubs will create jobs, increase STEM talent, and attract research funding and outside capital investment.



The DeWine-Husted Administration developed the Ohio Innovation Hubs Program in partnership with the Ohio General Assembly to spur investment outside Ohio's major metro areas. Similar to the Innovation Districts located in Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, Innovation Hubs combine the talents of leading academic and research institutions, workforce and economic development partners, and private companies to gain a competitive advantage through collaboration.

Supported by more than \$31.3 million in state funding from the Ohio Innovation Hubs Program and \$10.4 million in local investment, the new Northwest Ohio Glass Innovation Hub will build on Toledo's legacy as the "Glass Capital of the World" to accelerate innovation and job growth in both the glass sector and solar industry, which relies heavily on glass.

The Glass Innovation Hub will also place significant focus on creating a high-quality glass and solar workforce across multiple areas of expertise - from skilled trade workers to graduate-trained scientists and engineers - through collaboration with the University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, Owens Community College, Toledo Public Schools, and other northwest Ohio high schools and community colleges.

The Glass Innovation Hub is expected to have a \$284 million economic impact on the northwest Ohio region, spurring \$25 million in increased tax revenue and creating 1,600 new jobs and 230 new STEM graduates over the next seven years.

Keeping Ohio Moving



The Commercial Driver's License training program provides a tax credit to help lessen the financial burden of CDL training costs. The program gives employers the opportunity to upskill current and future employees in this high-demand industry, offering tax credits up to \$1.5 million per year until 2026. Employers can apply for half of approved training expenses up to \$25,000.

Headquartered in Cincinnati, Home City Ice has been an Ohio-based manufacturer since 1893. This family-owned business once delivered ice door-to-door but now can be found at gas stations and grocery stores in 20 states. A \$12,400 CDL Training Program tax credit, will support Home City Ice with internal training for drivers throughout the state to continue their legacy of ice delivery to hundreds of thousands of customers.

Data Center Tax Exemption Program

The Data Center Tax Exemption program provides a sales-tax exemption rate and term that allows for partial or full sales tax exemption on the purchase of eligible data center equipment. Projects must meet minimum investment and payroll thresholds to be eligible. Final approval of the exemption is contingent on approval by the Ohio Tax Credit Authority.

East Palestine Assistance

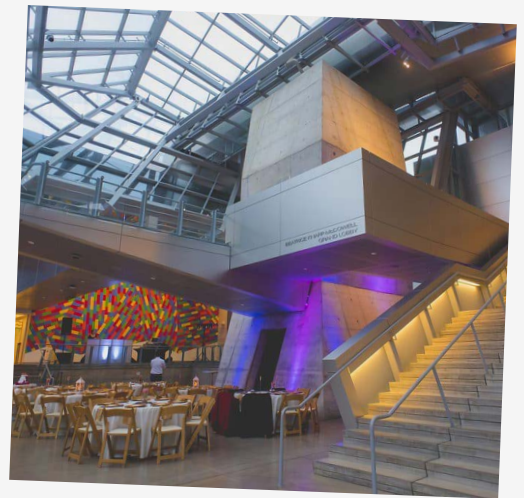
Following the February 2023 Norfolk Southern train derailment, the DeWine-Husted Administration established the East Palestine Emergency Support Program, designating \$5 million in 0% interest, forgivable loans to eligible businesses. Twenty-three businesses have received support, totaling more than \$3.8 million.

Among the recipients is the 1820 Candle Co., a local candle retailer with both online and brick-and-mortar presence in East Palestine. Faced with financial uncertainty in the aftermath of the derailment, the company secured a \$66,531 loan through the program. This funding has been instrumental in facilitating the business's recovery, specifically supporting payroll and ensuring operational stability during a challenging period.

Arts Grants

The **Ohio Arts Economic Relief Grant Program** was created in partnership with the Ohio General Assembly to support arts-based organizations with loss of revenue caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The program provides grants to help pay for employee compensation, recruitment, rehiring, training, rent or mortgage payments, and operating costs.

In July 2023, the program awarded \$20 million to 104 organizations in 33 counties across the state. Additional awards were made in November 2023, with \$2.4 million awarded to 16 organizations in 12 counties. Of those, the Akron Art Museum utilized its more than \$472,000 grant for operating costs, employee compensation, and a roof restoration project. The museum is home to more than 6,000 works of modern and contemporary art.



The Akron Art Museum received \$472,000

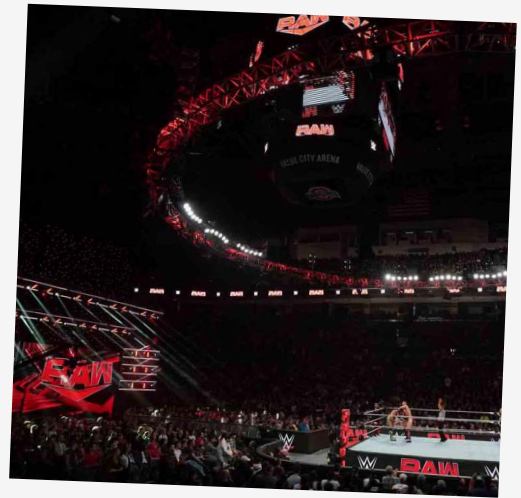
Motion Picture Tax Credits

The Motion Picture Tax Credit Program provides a refundable tax credit to encourage and develop the film and production industry in Ohio. The program provides a tax credit of 30 percent on production cast and crew wages and other in-state spending for feature-length films, documentaries, pre-Broadway productions, miniseries, video games, music videos and other eligible productions.

In February 2024, Ohio awarded over \$44 million in tax credits to 23 projects, including two highly anticipated productions: James Gunn's upcoming Superman: Legacy ("Genesis") and 2024 World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) events.

"Genesis" secured over \$11 million in tax credits to film 25 percent of its scenes in Cleveland and Cincinnati. The film is the latest about the comic book superhero Superman. The production, with a budget exceeding \$300 million, commenced filming in June. The film is scheduled for release in 2025. It is expected to create employment opportunities for over 3,000 Ohio residents.

Meanwhile, WWE will film throughout 2024 across Cincinnati, Cleveland, and other Ohio locations, benefiting from more than \$1.6 million in tax credits. Events like the live broadcast of WWE's flagship show, Monday Night Raw, from Toledo's Huntington Center in June, and upcoming broadcasts from Fairborn's Nutter Center in mid-July, along with the return of SummerSlam to Cleveland in August for the first time since 1996, promise significant economic boosts for each host city. These events underscore Ohio's appeal as a premier destination to live, work, and visit.



WWE received \$1.6 million in tax credits



23
PROJECTS



\$44M
IN TAX CREDITS AWARDED

Third Frontier

The Ohio Third Frontier Technology Validation and Start-up Fund supports Ohio research institutions and startups by providing grants to help determine commercial viability and license proven technologies.

Ohio Third Frontier granted \$4.8 million to companies like Visual Detection Systems to accelerate technology innovation across the state. The company, located in the village of Minerva, was awarded \$200,000 to help create a product to combat the opioid crisis. Visual Detection Systems created a wet wipe that changes color when it comes into contact with opioids, such as fentanyl. The wipes are intended for use by first responders, including police officers, firefighters, paramedics, FBI investigators, school resource officers, and health care providers.

The Ohio Venture Fund and Early-Stage Focus Fund support early stage, tech-based companies and those in underserved communities and populations.

The state awarded \$86 million to 11 local investments funds to provide capital to companies throughout Ohio focused on healthcare, manufacturing, food technologies, and more.

Of those awards, \$11 million was dedicated to minority and underserved founders through the Early-Stage Focus Fund. Westerville-based BOLD Opportunities Fund was one of three funds selected for the capital, receiving \$3 million to invest in high-growth, scalable, seed and early-stage information technology, software, and consumer packaged goods companies. BOLD won't just invest in any companies – the investment is specifically for women, minority, social and economically disadvantaged individuals, and geographic groups that have historically been overlooked by venture capital.

“These awards will help spur innovation by fostering a diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem and accelerating the growth of high-potential companies,” said Director Mihalik. “By directing these funds to historically under-represented founders and tech-focused companies, we’re leveling the playing field and ensuring everyone has a chance to succeed in the heart of innovation.”

The Third Frontier also supported 139 College Technology Internships.

Supporting Ohio’s Small Businesses

The Office of Small Business and Global Trade’s commitment to supporting businesses, large and small, as they maneuver in the global economy.

Central to their mission are the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), which offer essential counseling and assistance to individuals launching or expanding businesses. There are more than 996,000 small businesses in the state, totaling 99.6 percent of Ohio businesses. Small businesses employ 2.2 million Ohioans.



OHIO SBDC

11,665
CLIENTS

53,013
ADVISING HOURS

397
BUSINESS STARTS

5,093
JOBS CREATED/RETAINED

\$153.2M
CAPITAL ACCESSED

\$164.1M
SALES GROWTH

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs

Cecile Armbrust – Here We Go Express Inc.



In an effort to simplify and enhance their operations, entrepreneurs Cecile and Jim Armbrust decided to consolidate their trucking company, Here We Go Express, into one building. Moving away from a rented facility in Alliance, they aimed for expansion by acquiring a dedicated site to centralize their main operations and maintenance hub.

Facing obstacles securing funding, they turned to their local SBDC for assistance. Meeting one-on-one with the SBDC, Armbrust developed new financial projections, implemented a formal accounting system, and learned new skills to help grow her business. This support enabled them to secure a loan from a bank, leading to the purchase of their new business space in June 2023.

Award-Winning Manufacturer's Partnership with State Leads to Global Expansion

Haltec Corporation, a tire valve manufacturing company based in Leetonia, was named the Small Business Administration's Great Lakes Region V 2024 Small Business Exporter of the Year. The company's remarkable success can be attributed in part to the long-term counseling services provided by its local SBDC.



Haltec leveraged various services and programs offered by the Ohio Department of Development, including the International Market Access Grant for Exporter program, to enhance its global marketing efforts. These efforts included participation in international trade shows across Asia, Europe, and South America. Additionally, the company benefited from the Ohio Export Internship Program, which matched them with skilled interns to support their export initiatives.

“For several years, Haltec has benefited greatly from collaborating with the SBDC Export Assistance Network,” said Adam Smith, Haltec director of strategic marketing. “This partnership has been instrumental in propelling Haltec’s global expansion. SBDC’s resources have provided invaluable guidance and support, helping Haltec navigate the complexities of international trade regulations and optimize its export strategies.”

Ohio Internship Program Helps Businesses Overcome International Market Obstacles

Development is paving the way for businesses to overcome the challenges of international markets while providing college students with invaluable hands-on experience in global trade and commerce. Through the Ohio Export Internship Program, Development connects college students with businesses looking to either export for the first time or improve international sales. The program is recognized for fostering mutual growth and success for both students and businesses.

“My greatest accomplishment was creating an international certification and service support strategy to help the team get a wide perspective on where they are at and where they would like to go,” stated Kabir Abdullahi, who interned at Global Cooling, Inc. as part of the 2023 internship class. “All the data and research I put together is actually being implemented as action items for the upcoming year.”

These internships have a track record of success. In the 12 years since the program's inception, 466 student-company matches were created, resulting in 152 internship extensions and 81 new jobs. In total, Ohio-based companies have expanded into 424 new international markets. During the summer of 2024, Development connected 58 students with host companies.



Akron Native Uses Development's Veteran-Friendly Resources to Launch Company

Anthony "Tony" Meley, an Akron native, U.S. Army veteran, and owner of Meley Light Excavation, received mentoring services, technical support, and advice on how to overcome obstacles like obtaining the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business certification from Summit-Medina Business Alliance. The assistance from his local SBDC help Meley land two contracts totaling more than \$200,000 and make new business connections.

"With the help and resources from the Summit-Medina Business Alliance SBDC, we have been able to launch and expand with confidence," said Meley. "I recommend that anyone thinking about starting a business in Ohio to contact their local SBDC as a great resource for help."

HELPING MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES THRIVE

Through the Minority Business Development Division, we empower minority-, women-, and veteran-led ventures, as well as other disadvantaged businesses, by providing the resources they need to succeed. The 11 Minority Business Assistance Centers, located all across the state, provide technical assistance and professional consultation, and offer capital programs and incentives that remove barriers by offering equitable access to vital financial resources. These resources help businesses expand while also boosting the economy.

METRICS

that matter



\$9.8M

IN LOANS APPROVED FOR MORE THAN 220 MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

Micro Loans: 81 totaling \$3,453,750

MDL Loans: 1 totaling \$543,750

WBE Loans: 15 totaling \$3,958,109

CDFI LPP: 125 totaling \$1,880,224

\$33.4M

IN INDIRECT LOANS

CDFI LPP: 178 totaling \$17,108,219

OCAP: 30 totaling \$5,261,138

CEP 2.0: 14 totaling \$11,116,750



10,237

BUSINESS CLIENTS



10,733

COUNSELING HOURS



3,942

BUSINESS CERTIFICATIONS

745

Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)

587

Encouraging Diversity, Growth & Equity (EDGE)

550

Women Business Enterprise (WBE)

132

Veteran-Friendly Business Enterprise (VFBE)

Emerging Technology Firm Soars with Major Contracts and Expansion Plans



LRT Associates, founded by Lisa Turner in 2015, had a promising year, starting strong with a contract from the Rise Together Innovation Institute for a Smart Columbus project. While awaiting approval for another significant contract, Turner’s firm was shortlisted for a project with the city’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Additionally, LRT Associates secured subcontractor roles with the Ohio Department of Transportation and the City of Upper Arlington. With plans for expansion underway, they have hired a business development consultant, are in the process of hiring an operations manager, and are welcoming student interns.

Turner credited the Minority Business Development Division for their support, particularly through an Ohio Micro Loan that provided crucial capital for business development. These funds enabled enhanced efforts in research, marketing, and community outreach. She expressed deep gratitude to the MBDD team for their belief in her business and its growth potential.

“

“Behind every successful venture, there’s a moment of grace where someone took a chance on you. The micro loan and the guidance I received were my moments of grace—fueling not just the growth of my business, but also my belief in the power of community and support.”

—Lisa Turner

Cincinnati Skin Care Brand Expands with Development Assistance

Cincinnati beauty brand mogul Sylvia Brownlee wanted to make an intentional impact in the industry for women of color. It’s one of the reasons she launched her skin care business Skin by Brownlee.

With the **Women Business Enterprise** loan, Brownlee can now expand her business without having to worry about high interest rates. She recently completed a new building in Hamilton County.



“Being a recipient of a WBE loan has empowered me as a female entrepreneur, giving me the resources and confidence to pursue my business goals and make a positive impact in the skincare industry.”

—Sylvia Brownlee



Loan Fuels Rapid Business Growth

After over a decade in the construction industry, Kim Gilmore recognized a critical gap in the market: the need for a diverse range of products from a single, convenient supplier. Motivated by this realization and the desire to establish a local woman-owned business in a traditionally male-dominated field, Gilmore founded All Contractors Supply in 2011. Starting from a spare bedroom in her home, the business has recently experienced significant growth, thanks in part to assistance from Development.

In 2023, during a local Chamber of Commerce event, Gilmore approached Director Mihalik, sharing her urgent need for a larger building to accommodate her growing business and the challenge of securing financing for the purchase. **Director Mihalik connected her with MBDD Chief Monica Womack and with their support, Gilmore secured a \$500,000 loan and purchased a new 14,550-square-foot warehouse.**



Director Mihalik and MBDD Chief Monica L. Womack stopped by for a tour of the new building in February.

Veteran-Friendly Business is Boosted with Help from Local MBAC



Michael Miller’s laundromat business takes the chore of doing laundry off the to-do list. When he wanted to expand services, the veteran turned to his local Minority Business Assistance Center (MBAC) for help.

Miller participated in a 4-week business training program that covered high level marketing, financial advising, accounting, and legal practices.

Miller also participated in their ‘Pitch Night’ hosted for minority and female entrepreneurs, where participants were given the opportunity to share their business plan and the course material they learned throughout the program. With the assistance from MBAC, Miller achieved certification as a Veteran-Friendly Business Enterprise and successfully expanded SpinCycle Solutions to new locations. Miller now operates business in both Akron and Youngstown.

“The MBAC Launch class has been instrumental and inspirational in my professional growth, providing tailored mentorship and resources that will significantly boost my entrepreneurial skills and confidence,” Miller told the *Business Journal*. “Through its guidance, I will now be able to successfully navigate challenges, refine my business strategy, and form valuable connections within the Mahoning Valley.”

Local Coffee Curator’s State MBE Certification Leads to More Business Opportunities

Columbus native Douglas Buckley spent over a decade in the East African country of Tanzania, where he taught women the traditional art of hand roasting coffee. Driven by his passion for coffee and his commitment to supporting coffee farmers, Buckley returned home in 2019 and launched Black Kahawa Coffee. **As a Minority Business Enterprise, the company has accessed essential resources for contracts, management, and finances, fueling its growth.** Buckley now sells his coffee in local grocery stores and operates a food truck. In 2024, Buckley opened a new coffee patio in downtown Columbus, introducing the rich flavors of East African coffee to his hometown.





CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The vision of the office of BroadbandOhio is to bridge the digital gap by providing high-speed internet access across Ohio and building a best-in-class broadband network. Through a series of impactful initiatives and local projects, more Ohioans than ever before in rural communities and urban areas alike now have the tools they need to participate in important aspects of the modern economy such as telehealth, working from home, and getting an online education.

METRICS

that matter



\$77.5M

IN OHIO RESIDENTIAL BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT (ORBEG) FUNDING

will be awarded to internet service providers during round two to fund last-mile broadband infrastructure projects across Ohio



\$50M

TO ASSIST INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

with the financial burden of infrastructure costs through the Pole Replacement and Undergrounding Program



\$10M

ALLOCATED TO CLEVELAND

to provide broadband to 170,000 households at just \$18 per month for at least 10 years



\$500K

ALLOCATED TO DARKE COUNTY

for an expansion project that improves internet access for more than 90 percent of county residents



9

COMMUNITY-BASED NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

received more than \$650,000 through the Digital Inclusion Pilot Project Grant to expand digital opportunity



\$125K

AWARDED TO THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

to provide high-speed internet connectivity to the Molly Caren Agricultural Center



12

TEAMS FROM 14 OHIO COUNTIES

participated in the second and third cohorts of the Broadband Community Accelerator program

Connecting Cleveland

In January, BroadbandOhio supplied \$10 million in grant funding to create a broadband network that will offer high-speed, low-cost internet across Cleveland.

BroadbandOhio partnered with the city of Cleveland and Cleveland-based nonprofit DigitalC to support this project, which had an estimated total cost of \$53 million and is projected to benefit the entirety of Cleveland's 170,000 households. This initiative will lock in a rate of just \$18 per month for at least 10 years, only allowing changes due to inflation after the fifth year. DigitalC, which broke ground on the project earlier in 2024, also worked to encourage Cleveland residents to adopt and use broadband by offering basic coaching and digital literacy training.





“

“We all know high-speed internet is simply a requirement to live, work, and play in the world today. This incredible investment and partnership from the State will help us accomplish our vision of ensuring every single Clevelander will have access to an affordable, powerful internet plan.”

**—Justin M. Bibb,
Mayor of Cleveland**

\$10M

**IN FUNDING
PROVIDED BY
BROADBANDOHIO**

170,000

**HOUSEHOLDS
RECEIVING
ASSISTANCE**

\$18

**MONTHLY COST FOR
HOUSEHOLDS FOR
BROADBAND**

Darke County Initiative

BroadbandOhio awarded \$500,000 in grant funding projected to provide greater high-speed internet coverage to more than 90 percent of Darke County’s residents.

The funding supported the Darke County Board of Commissioners in its partnership with Agile Network Builders, LLC and was projected to improve the coverage for 20,000 households, or roughly 50,000 residents. Project activities funded through this grant included acquiring site space for a tower in the northwest part of the county, installing equipment, providing fixed wireless, and maintaining the infrastructure related to the network. The project, which has a total cost of about \$2.8 million, is expected to be completed by June 30, 2025.

Funding Programs Impacting Ohio

Two of BroadbandOhio's major funding sources are ORBEG and the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program, and both initiatives will have a powerful impact across Ohio.



Charter Communications' expansion project announcement in Wyandot County

Internet providers began applying in November for the second round of ORBEG, which supplies \$77.5 million to fund last-mile broadband infrastructure projects and was provided through the U.S. Department of Treasury's Capital Projects Fund. Grant awards are based on a competitive scoring system that takes into account factors such as how many unserved and underserved addresses would be affected.

BroadbandOhio received nearly \$800 million through the BEAD program in the summer of 2023 and began its challenge process in May 2024 to create the final funding map. Funds from BEAD, which were allocated to Ohio by the NTIA, will comprise the third and fourth rounds of the ORBEG program.

Molly Caren Agricultural Connectivity Project

In September, Development announced \$125,000 in funding for a groundbreaking initiative by The Ohio State University.

The funding helped establish high-speed internet connectivity to Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) Molly Caren Agricultural Center in London, Ohio. This project is expected to generate valuable insights into the effectiveness of semi- and fully autonomous farming equipment that will help shape the future of agriculture.



BroadbandOhio Chief Peter Voderberg (left) at OSU's Molly Caren Agricultural Center

Infrastructure Reimbursement Program

The Broadband Pole Replacement and Undergrounding Program is allocating \$50 million to help curb the costs internet service providers endure for infrastructure.

Through this program, qualifying internet service providers are reimbursed for the costs of necessary pole replacements, mid-span pole installations, and underground projects that have taken place since July 1, 2023. It was established through House Bill 33 of the 135th General Assembly and reimburses applicants an amount equal to the lesser of \$7,500 or 75 percent of the total amount paid by the applicant for each pole replacement or mid-span pole installation. The program will reimburse providers for qualifying infrastructure costs until the exhaustion of funding or by June 1, 2029.




\$50M
IN GRANTS

Supporting Ohioans' Digital Opportunity Needs



More than \$650,000 was awarded to help address barriers in digital access through the federal State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program.

Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan, which aims to promote meaningful adoption and the use of high-speed internet for all Ohioans, was approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration in March.

Through funding from the Digital Inclusion Pilot Project Grant, nine community-based, non-profit organizations addressed barriers in digital access by providing device access, technical support, digital literacy training, and more. Receiving \$100,000 apiece were Hocking Athens Perry Community Action, Accompanying Returning Citizens with Hope, the Spanish American Committee, and Mercy Health-Toledo. Also receiving funding through the pilot project grant were Central Community House (\$92,800), Goodwill Columbus (\$68,382), National Church Residences (\$43,450), the Ohio University-Office of Digital Accessibility (\$26,758), and the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau (\$23,200).

ACCOMPANYING RETURNING CITIZENS WITH HOPE (ARCH)

Through the Digital Inclusion Pilot Project Grant, ARCH was awarded \$100,000 in August.

ARCH worked with community organizations to offer both group classes and individual support sessions to facilitate learning regarding how to use digital tools, in addition to supplying laptops, cases, and mice.

Among the individuals benefiting from the program included Leon Goodsby and Larry Thirsty. Goodsby had been incarcerated for more than 40 years and had a limited knowledge of how to use the internet before participating in an ARCH class which showed him how to add WIFI and passwords at different locations and how to download apps and also provided him with a laptop. Thirsty had just been released from a local jail and had no place to live, no job and no clothing when he was referred to ARCH through the County Office of Policy and Justice. Through the ARCH class, Thirsty received private instruction and a computer.

ASHTABULA FARM BUREAU

Through the Digital Inclusion Pilot Project Grant, the Ashtabula Farm Bureau was awarded \$23,200 in August.

Recognizing the critical role of technology in agriculture, the organization prioritized programs that address the challenges related to broadband access. In addition to collaborating with industry partners and organizing events, the farm bureau developed a "digital skills guide" aimed at addressing the challenges farmers and rural residents face in keeping up with technology in agriculture and daily life due to limited broadband access and limited knowledge/skills. To create the digital skills guide, the organization incorporated personal stories and actively engaged with farmers and rural residents. Over the past few months, farmers and rural residents have gained access to valuable resources related to agricultural practices, business management, mental health support, and technological advancements.

Community Accelerator

The second and third cohorts of the BroadbandOhio Community Accelerator program were organized to help create localized broadband expansion plans.

More than 30 hours of no-cost counseling is provided to each team through the program, which is a collaboration between BroadbandOhio and The Ohio State University Extension. Through the program, participants receive support to help their communities prepare for funding opportunities at the state and federal levels by identifying broadband goals, understanding available funding options, targeting capital dollars to support implementation, and expanding workforce development.

Community Accelerator Program

Third Cohort Announced

First Cohort	Second Cohort	Third Cohort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Defiance County ■ Shelby County ■ Tuscarawas County ■ Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission: Adams, Brown, Clermont, Lawrence, Scioto, and Vinton counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ashtabula County ■ Henry County ■ Lucas County ■ Monroe County ■ Paulding County ■ Union County ■ Hocking, Athens, and Perry counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Summit County ■ Cuyahoga County ■ Guernsey County ■ Hancock County ■ City of Canton (Stark County)

MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO

JON HUSTED
LT. GOVERNOR OF OHIO

Department of Development
BroadbandOhio

“

“Having the opportunity to work with state experts and learn from other communities is truly invaluable. Being a county that is both urban and rural, we were able to discuss how we could better engage our rural residents and obtain their input on the digital inequities they are facing.”

—Lucas Camuso-Stall, Director of Government Relations & Advocacy, Toledo Lucas County Public Library

SHOWCASING OHIO'S ATTRACTIONS



The mission of TourismOhio is to showcase Ohio's diverse attractions, vibrant communities, and unique history through strategic partnerships, innovative marketing, and by spotlighting all that makes the state a unique place for residents and visitors alike. By leveraging Ohio's rich history, natural beauty, and second-to-none accommodations, we're demonstrating all that the state has to offer as a place of adventure, a place of promise, and the place for you!

METRICS

that matter



106M

PAID IMPRESSIONS



776K

PAID AD CLICKS



21M

VIDEO VIEWS



4.4M

OHIO.ORG
PAGEVIEWS
(52% ORGANIC
TRAFFIC)



109

EXHIBITOR BOOTHS AT OHIO TOURISM DAY



8,924

LISTINGS ON OHIO.ORG



769,338

CLICKS TO PARTNER WEBSITES



302,655

“OHIO, THE HEART OF IT ALL”
FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS
(+3.3% YOY)



142,736

“OHIO, THE HEART OF IT ALL”
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS
(+2.7% YOY)



Record-Setting Tourism Numbers

SURPASSING ALL PREVIOUS RECORDS, TOURISM NOW BOASTS ITS HIGHEST-EVER ECONOMIC IMPACT, EXCEEDING \$56 BILLION ANNUALLY.

In 2023, the number of visits to Ohio reached 238 million, increasing by 5 million compared to 2022. Overnight visits reached 48 million, with 84 percent of overnight visitors saying they are likely to visit Ohio again in the next 12 months. Visitor activity supported \$4.6 billion in state and local tax revenues. The tourism industry also directly and indirectly supports over 436,000 jobs in Ohio, including those in the food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, retail, trade, and lodging industries.



\$56B

**VISITOR SPENDING +
INDIRECT BUSINESS SALES**



238M
VISITS



48M
OVERNIGHT VISITS



Ohio's tourism industry has grown significantly since the beginning of the DeWine-Husted Administration. Total visitor spending increased from \$48 billion in 2019 to \$56 billion in 2023, an increase of more than 16 percent.

Ohio Tourism Day 2024

Governor and First Lady DeWine and Director Lydia Mihalik joined nearly 110 travel and tourism industry partners on the lawn of the Ohio Statehouse to celebrate the tourism industry’s continued success in Ohio. Visitors to this year’s Tourism Day event were encouraged to plan their next Ohio adventure with help from travel and tourism representatives from all five regions of the state. Attendees learned about Ohio’s unique destinations, sampled made-in-Ohio products, snapped photos with mascots, and enjoyed live entertainment.



Tourism Day at the Ohio Statehouse

Governor DeWine and Director Mihalik then continued the celebration at the historic Findlay Market in Cincinnati, one of Ohio’s premier culinary and cultural destinations.



Gov. DeWine speaks outside Cincinnati landmark Findlay Market on Ohio Tourism Day

DID YOU KNOW?

Forbes listed the Hocking Hills region as one of its Top 50 Places to Travel in 2023, noting its picturesque views and proximity to other destinations.



Cardinal Christmas



Ohio's thriving economy, picturesque scenery, and welcoming spirit took center stage in TourismOhio's 2023 Holiday Advertising Campaign, "Cardinal Christmas." This heartfelt story revolves around a family reunited for the holidays, driven by newfound opportunities in Ohio.

In the emotional and inspiring commercial, centered around a handmade cardinal Christmas ornament, a young girl surprises her grandmother with the news that she and her family are returning to Ohio after her mother received a new career opportunity. The story highlights how the DeWine-Husted Administration's meaningful investments have empowered businesses to grow, create jobs, transform communities, and bring families closer together – making Ohio the Heart of Opportunity.

Produced by Columbus-based Ron Foth Advertising, "Cardinal Christmas" featured an all-Ohio native cast. Principal filming took place in the Columbus neighborhood of Clintonville and included several nods to Ohio's rich innovative history and culture, including The Ohio State University, world-renowned Hocking Hills State Park, and Playhouse Square in Cleveland.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CAMPAIGN INCLUDE:

54M BROADCAST
IMPRESSIONS



5M VIDEO
VIEWS

Ohio Total Solar Eclipse

In April 2024, Ohio witnessed a rare celestial event with a Total Solar Eclipse sweeping across the state—a once-in-a-generation phenomenon. **To maximize this unique opportunity, TourismOhio launched an interactive map designed to entice visitors from all over.** The map not only pinpointed prime viewing spots and Eclipse watch parties but also showcased outdoor locations and top attractions across all 55 counties in the path of totality. By encouraging travelers to arrive early and stay late, TourismOhio aimed to make this cosmic event not just a spectacle, but an unforgettable Ohio experience.

- 450 total Eclipse-related events were promoted on the Eclipse county pages
- Accounted for 23 percent of pageviews in the two months leading up to the Eclipse
- Paid search and social campaign generated more than 40,000 clicks
- Highest clicks came from Detroit, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Grand Rapids
- Media releases generated over 1,000 clicks to the landing page

FROM OUR PARTNERS:

“The solar eclipse landing page for the once-in-a-lifetime eclipse event made all of the difference in the world to Union County. Along with our fortuitous location in the path of totality, it was the creative staff with the Ohio Department of Development that made the difference to our business owners. Through your engaging Ohio.org/Eclipse page and subsequent promotions showcasing the variety of event offerings, Union County experienced unprecedented economic impact from visitors from Ohio and beyond.”

**Karen Eylon, Director,
Union County
Tourism**



TourismOhio Trails



TourismOhio continues to have success highlighting and showcasing all Ohio has to offer through seasonal trails. The interactive map of 82 trails consistently ranks as top-performing content on Ohio.org.

TourismOhio partners with local and county convention and visitors bureaus to ensure all of Ohio's geographic regions—from big cities to charming towns—are represented.

HISTORICAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TRAIL

In September, Ohio.org launched the Historical Underground Railroad Trail. The trail includes 15 stops across the state, highlighting Ohio's legacy and involvement with the historic network, and the people who assisted others to freedom from slavery.

NEW
trail for
2023



Stops include the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati and the Underground Railroad Museum in Flushing, as well as notable historic locations like the John Rankin House in Ripley and the John Brown House in Akron.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS TRAIL

TourismOhio once again brightened the holiday season with its Holiday Lights Trail. The statewide showcase of enchanting holiday displays, merry train rides, charming towns, and twinkling lights is back to dazzle visitors on the hunt for holiday cheer.

The trail was the third-highest viewed page on Ohio.org with more than 250,000 page views—a 95 percent increase over the previous year. To kick off the trail, TourismOhio worked with NBC's TODAY. The network featured Steubenville and the Nutcracker Village as one of its Merriest Main Streets across the country.

TOP 3
page on
Ohio.org



OHIO ICE CREAM TRAIL

The Ohio Ice Cream Trail features family-owned shops and nationally recognized ice cream chains all across the state. Responding to growing popularity, the trail was expanded in 2024 to include 54 stops.



34 NEW STOPS
FOR 2024

The trail highlights Ohio's dairy industry, a major economic booster for the state. Ranking 11th in the nation for milk production, Ohio is home to more than 1,400 dairy farms and 250,000 dairy cows. Annually, Ohio produces nearly 650 million gallons of milk.

Events Promotion



From outdoor adventures and world-class art, to engaging events and family fun, Ohio has many unique destinations to explore. Research shows travelers plan their trips around these special events. TourismOhio is showcasing how Ohio is the Heart of it All with seasonal content and the award-winning *Ohio Travel Guide*.

Recurring seasonal content ranked among the top-visited pages on Ohio.org, including:



100 THINGS TO DO IN OHIO THIS SUMMER
(30k pageviews, May & June paid support only)



100 THINGS TO DO IN OHIO THIS FALL
(35k pageviews)

New Summer Events Guide

The new Official 2024 Ohio Summer Events Guide featured 440 top events—five from each of Ohio’s 88 counties. The guide was made available online, promoted weekly across Ohio, The Heart of it All social media channels, and distributed at Ohio Tourism Day.



NOTABLE OHIOANS

TourismOhio’s “Notable Ohioan” blog series about **Bob and Jo Liggett** significantly boosted the visibility of one of Ohio’s most beloved festivals—the **Circleville Pumpkin Show**. The Liggetts have clinched the top prize for the largest pumpkin 16 times in the past 30 years—including in 2023! At last year’s show, their pumpkin weighed in at 2,388.5 pounds, breaking a state record. The blog post generated 4,969 pageviews, making it the most popular “Notable Ohioan” blog series for eight months.

Re-Imagining Rest Areas

In May 2023, Governor DeWine, Development, and the Ohio Department of Transportation released a plan to build 33 new rest areas and upgrade more than 40 throughout the state by the end of 2026. These newly rebuilt rest area sites will feature new amenities including a larger lobby space, specially curated Ohio-themed music, custom furniture and woodworking, and regionally themed artwork and displays. Rest areas will also see landscaping updates this year including native plants, buckeye trees, and informational signage. TourismOhio is collaborating with Convention and Visitors Bureaus to highlight local attractions and experiences.

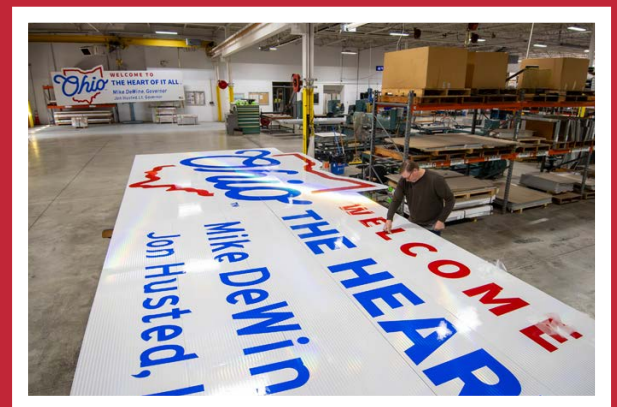


Licking County Rest Area

In recognition of World Heritage Day in April 2024, Governor DeWine, Director Mihalik, and ODOT Director Jack Marchbanks unveiled the newly redesigned Licking County I-70 westbound rest area. Inside the rest area, travelers will also see images of Central Ohio attractions, such as the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, the Columbus Zoo, Dawes Arboretum, COSI, and the restored 1928 Midland Theatre. A 10-foot Ohio map highlights other points of interest, including Ohio's colleges and universities, state parks and campgrounds, and nearby lakes. A video board displays live weather and real-time traffic and road alerts, as well as other tourist information.

New Ohio Welcome Signs

Starting in September 2023, Development began working with ODOT to replace Ohio's welcome signs. The new signs are designed in the reimagined Ohio, The Heart of it All brand. In total, 36 new signs have been installed across the state. The largest signs, measuring more than 40 feet wide, spans I-70 at the Indiana border in Preble County. It was featured in the state's "Cardinal Christmas" advertising campaign.



ODOT designed and constructed the new welcome signs in Columbus.



UNESCO Designation

In October 2023, Ohio celebrated a historic milestone as the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks became Ohio's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, marking the 25th such designation in the United States. These ancient earthworks, dating back 2,000 years, now enjoy international recognition and protection alongside iconic sites like The Great Barrier Reef, Stonehenge, and The Great Wall of China. This prestigious UNESCO status promises not only to preserve these cultural treasures but also to significantly boost tourism in the three Ohio counties where the Earthworks are located.

To support this momentous achievement, TourismOhio and the Ohio History Connection collaborated on a series of initiatives to highlight the sites as a major tourism offering.

- The Fall paid search campaign prominently featured the Earthworks
- A dedicated seasonal landing page, "Fall in Ohio," showcased the Earthworks alongside other key attractions.
- Extensive social media coverage across Ohio, The Heart of it All's platforms amplified awareness and engagement, educating followers about the significance of the Earthworks.
- The 2024 Ohio Travel Guide featured a comprehensive two-page spread dedicated to the Earthworks.
- Media interviews and releases garnered local and national coverage.



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