



# THE ECONOMIC PULSE

## New Organization—Same Mission

In June, a two-year process of research and discussion ended as Ashland Area Council for Economic Development (AACED) was set on the path to become a private entity. The current organization (AACED) is a Council of Government. By the end of 2016, AACED will transition into *Ashland Area Economic Development, Inc. (AAED)*. AAED will be formed as a 501(c)6 non-profit entity, which is the next step in the evolutionary process of economic development in the Ashland area. In acting as a privatized, non-profit organization, AAED will have the ability to better operate at the pace of business, ensure complete confidentiality with clients, and strengthen relations with private investors.

The need to transition into a private entity became apparent as we experienced the pitfalls of operating as a COG and learned that the vast majority of economic development organizations around the state were operating as non-profit entities. One of the best examples of successful privatization is JobsOhio, the organization that handles economic development for the State of Ohio. In 2012, Governor John Kasich created JobsOhio so that the *government* factor was removed from the attraction of business and industry to Ohio. JobsOhio is able to do business with companies in a confidential manner, and companies prefer it that way. Governor Kasich saw that it was up to government to adapt to business, and not vice versa. Following the JobsOhio example makes sense for economic development in the Ashland area.

In addition to creating the new 501(c)6 entity, a separate 501(c)3 non-profit corporation will also be created. This entity will give investors and donors an added perk, as they can choose to receive a



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tax deduction for their investments in economic development.

*What does this transition mean for our investors, partners, and clients?*

A) **Seamless transition:** The office will continue to do business as usual throughout the rest of the year and beyond.

B) **Continued mission:** AAED will continue the mission of supporting the Ashland area's economic stability and growth through business attraction, retention, expansion, and entrepreneurship.

C) **Investor perks:** Investors will donate just as they always have before, with the added benefit of receiving a tax deduction for their donation if they so wish.

D) **Full confidentiality:** AAED will maintain full confidentiality with clients who prefer their information to remain private.

E) **Continued regional and state partnership:** As a private entity, AAED has the ability to fully partner with TeamNEO and JobsOhio, giving us access to numerous leads and incentives that could result in big wins for the Ashland area.

Have questions? Call our office at 419-289-3200!

## A New Brew



*Owners Doug and Anna Reynolds in front of the Gilbert Furniture building, which they purchased in July 2016 for their brewery/restaurant.*

The **Uniontown Brewing Company** is set to grace downtown Ashland in the near future. Ashland-natives Doug and Anna Reynolds purchased the old Gilberts building in July and made the announcement that they would be opening a microbrewery and restaurant in the location, the only one of its kind in the Ashland area. With all of Ashland buzzing with excitement for this new business, we asked Doug and Anna a few questions about their new venture.

**Economic Development:** How many jobs do you anticipate creating for the brewery?

**Doug and Anna:** 12 – 14 full and part time positions.

**Economic Development:** What can you tell us about the type of beer you plan to brew and food you plan to serve?

**Doug and Anna:** *We will offer a variety of seasonal favorites to cater to all appetites. We plan on using fresh greens and scratch-made dressings, sandwiches, and dishes infused with our brewed-on-premises craft beer. Our plan is to use locally grown food and have a varying menu including seasonal items. We will offer lunch and dinner menus 6 days a week. We will have 6 – 8 craft brewed ales on tap and also seasonal selections. We will be a functioning 5-barrel (bbl) brew system that will supply craft beer to our patrons. We will be serving a fresh menu using local distributors and serving fresh craft beer brewed on premises for sale on premises.*

**Economic Development:** What will the environment be like in your restaurant?

**Doug and Anna:** We will offer casual dining with fine food!  
Uniontown Brewing Co. will be a place to gather with family and friends to enjoy good times, good conversation, a great meal, and a pint or two. We're looking forward to live music pulling in our friends and neighbors to enjoy an afternoon or evening on Main Street.

**Economic Development:** What attracts you to doing business in Ashland?

**Doug and Anna:** We see so much value in small town business, entrepreneurs, and this community. Doug and I are both Ashland natives, and our heart and souls are going into this project. We are so excited to be in the Gilbert's building and to be part of the revitalization of Ashland's Main Street.

**Economic Development:** What are some of your goals at this point?

**Doug and Anna:** This is our community, our hometown, and we want to be a part of the revitalization of downtown Ashland. We will promote other local businesses and community efforts to

bring people downtown to shop from Ashland entrepreneurs. and community efforts to bring people downtown to shop from Ashland entrepreneurs.

Be sure to visit and like the [Uniontown Brewing Company's Facebook page!](#)



***"We see so much value in small town business, entrepreneurs, and this community." -Doug and Anna Reynolds, owners of Uniontown Brewing Co.***

## Buying Local

There's a new initiative in our communities this year, and it's called *Buy In Ashland County*. This initiative was born from the feedback we received during dozens of business visits around the county in 2015. Many business owners expressed that while Ashland County has plenty to offer consumers, people just don't know what's here. As a result, the Buy In Ashland County group was formed. For the first half of this year, the Buy In group began doing Cash Mobs, which are meant to raise awareness and give a boost to small local businesses. Cash Mobs are groups of people who shop at a particular store at the same time. The Buy In group has successfully "mobbed" 5 different local stores in 2016 thus far:

- **Blackfork Inn Bed & Breakfast and Gift Shop**, in Loudonville
- **Kids Kountry & More**, downtown Ashland
- **Sparkleez Crystals**, in Ashland
- **Hanover House**, downtown Loudonville
- **Cliff's Greenhouse and Garden Center**, north of Savannah



## Investor Spotlight

CC&J has invested in our



organization since they arrived in the Ashland community in 2013 and has graciously donated to us through in-kind services. We rely on CC&J for our legal needs and applaud their community-mindedness.

CC&J's roots stem back to the Civil War when Lyman Critchfield served as Attorney General of Ohio. The firm now has 42 attorneys in 5 area communities and handles a wide range of matters. They serve all manner of clients, from individuals up to international corporations.

CC&J is proud to offer superior and prompt client service at a reasonable cost and with the highest ethical standards.

Be sure to visit them at [www.ccj.com](http://www.ccj.com)!

During the summer months, the Buy In group has focused on encouraging community members to buy locally grown and made foods from our farmers markets and shops. A contest was held on Facebook in which community members could post pictures of the local foods they bought or recipes they made using local ingredients. A winner was selected at random, who received a basket of local goods and gift cards to area businesses -- that winner was Martha Buckner!

The Buy In group consists of representatives from Ashland Area Economic Development, the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce, the Ashland Area CVB, Ashland Main Street, and the Loudonville-Mohican Chamber of Commerce.



*Martha Buckner, winner of the Buy Local farmer's market contest*

## Reinvesting in Polk

The Village of Polk has recently been established as a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) in which property owners may apply for a property tax exemption on the improved valuation of their property as a result of construction or renovation. This includes residential and commercial properties. The CRA program was created by the State of Ohio to incentivize the revitalization of areas that have experienced blight and a lack of new investment. After carefully evaluating Polk's needs, it was determined that establishing this incentive for residents to make improvements to their properties would positively impact the village's quality of life.

### ***Eligibility:***

- The property must be within the

Polk village limits.

- The property owner must spend at least \$5,000 on residential improvement or \$10,000 on commercial improvement.
- This applies only to improvements that begin after July 8, 2016, which is the CRA's establishment date.

### ***What you need to know:***

- For residential improvements: A property tax exemption may be applied for either before or after an improvement project is completed. This includes new construction. The application is reviewed by the Polk Housing Council, who determines eligibility. Then, the exemption is received. The exemption entitles property owners to abate 75% of the improved valuation of the

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property as a result of remodeling or construction for 10 years. Those who receive a CRA exemption are subject to an annual inspection of the property.

- For commercial improvements:

An exemption must be applied for *before* any renovation or construction begins. The process for enacting a commercial CRA exemption is more involved than residential exemptions and requires the property owner to en-

ter into an agreement with the Village of Polk. Anyone interested in a commercial exemption is encouraged to contact Ashland Area Economic Development for full details.

**Anyone who is interested in applying for a CRA exemption should contact Ashland Area Economic Development to begin the application process.**



## Bendon Publishing's Expansion

If you've been down Baney Road in Ashland in months past, you've likely noticed something new going on with Bendon Publishing. The Ashland-based publishing company recently finished an expansion that added a 8,934 square feet and 11 new positions.



Brad Carrabine, Marketing Designer, explained that Bendon's quick growth eventually led to limitations on space. When Brad started with the company in 2010, it employed approximately 30-40 people. Now, it employs over 100 in the Ashland location alone and has opened two other locations, one in Franklin, TN and San Francisco. The flagship location remains in Ashland. The expanded building hosts an open-floor art department with executive offices on the perimeter. Also included are a workout room, showers, new restrooms, and a new break room. The new square footage allows room for future growth.



*Exterior of Bendon's expansion*

Bendon started in 2001 and is a leading producer of children's books and more. The company has partnered with names such as Disney, DC Comics, Hello Kitty, Lisa Frank, Marvel, My Little Pony, Nickelodeon, and Star Wars and has product in 81,000 retail outlets around the world.

# Manufacturing—See the Possibilities

*This article was written by Jim Mongiardo, plant manager at Tremco, Inc. in Ashland, and published in the Ashland Times-Gazette on July 15, 2016.*

Crash test dummies, bicycle seats, electronic circuit boards, PVC plastic used for flooring and vinyl siding and pipe, riding mower seats, erosion-control straw blankets, foam packaging and foam for furniture and medical products, rubber and silicone gaskets for sealing windows and doors. What do all these very different things have in common? They are all manufactured!



**TREMCO**

Without manufacturing, none of those things exist. So what is manufacturing or production? A dictionary defines manufacturing as "the making of goods or wares by manual labor or by machinery. The making or producing of anything." Yes anything! Actually, except for what is mined or farmed, every other thing is manufactured. And yet very few people think about manufacturing when they are thinking about what they want to do with their lives.

For sure there are important service jobs like law enforcement, fire protection, clergy, sales people, store clerks, news reporting, government (not always the best service, but that's another story). But all those important people cannot do their jobs without a considerable amount of manufactured products. Weapons, police cars, communication devices, fire hoses, fire trucks, candles, church pews, Bibles, buildings, cash registers, price stickers, freezers, refrigerators, racks, desks, printers, computers, office dividers, chairs to name a few, are all manufactured.

So where are these important items produced? Some are made in modern high-tech factories, requiring sophisticated computerized controls and possibly robotics and many college-degreed individuals. Some are made in low-tech settings with a lot of manual labor required to produce and/or assemble parts. Some items are made in old, dark and hot buildings, but that is not typical. Nor is it typical for items to be manufactured in a fully automated factory with robots doing most of the work. Most manufacturing plants are somewhere in between, requiring some college-educated employees, some vocationally skilled employees, some office staff and some motivated, caring individuals who can safely operate equipment, solve problems and improve their work areas every day. Most plants today are clean and safe and can be a great place to have a satisfying lifelong career. A satisfying career? In manufacturing? How about as a doctor or as lawyer, or as marine biologist, or as a cosmetologist, or as a police officer, or in an air-conditioned office, or as a mechanic? Those certainly can be satisfying jobs. So what's so great about going to work every day in a factory to make the same thing over and over again? I can only speak from personal experience from working in various plants that made all the items listed in the opening paragraph. There is nothing like the satisfied feeling at the end of a day that you worked hard with your hands and your brain to finish all the tasks required to manufacture all the orders on the schedule. The feeling that our team and our individual efforts took care of our customers' needs, and we did it safely and effectively. The feeling that our company remained the manufacturer of choice for our customers and remained strong and successful. The feeling that I helped my manufacturing plant continue to employ my friends and co-workers and help keep the community prosperous.

There are clearly some days in a manufacturing plant that don't go how you want them to. Such is life. But there are plenty of days that make you proud to be part of something that is a necessary part of our lives. And while I have truly enjoyed all my experiences in manufacturing, it is not the career path for all people. But neither is college, being a doctor, working in an office, being in the military or flipping burgers. So when you are thinking about your career choices or your children's' career choices, just look all around you to see manufacturing and see the possibilities.

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## Ohio EPA: The "Warm & Fuzzy" Side

In May, Joy Padgett of the Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) visited our office and educated us on the services her division provides. Joy described herself as representing the EPA's "warm and fuzzy" side. She explained that all too often, people are not aware of the good things the EPA can provide. DEFA is purely meant to help businesses and communities with environmental issues and to be the "networkers" to help get things taken care of before penalties are assessed or problems get out of hand.

Within DEFA, there are three offices that might be helpful to you:

- The **Office of Outreach & Customer Support (OCS)** helps businesses and communities connect with the resources they need to get environmental help so that needs can be met in an expedient manner.
- The **Office of Financial Assistance (OFA)** works to improve the quality of Ohio's water resources by financing cost-effective and environmentally sound projects.
- The **Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention (OCAPP)** provides *free* and *confidential* assistance to businesses to help them comply with Ohio's environmental requirements, focusing on the needs of small business. Private consultants charge big bucks for what this office does for free. OCAPP also administers the Environmental Excellence (E3) program, recognizing entities for their commitment to environmental excellence.

If you would like a conversation with DEFA, we encourage you to reach out to Joy Padgett at 614-644-3783 or [joy.padgett@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:joy.padgett@epa.ohio.gov).



## Small Business News

### Smart Digital



Smart Digital, a local Ashland company that specializes in security-focused digital technologies, played an important part in securing Cleveland during the week of the Republican National Convention. Brent Canfield, owner of Smart Digital, explained

that his Sentry PODS, which are portable surveillance cameras that can be controlled from a smart phone to monitor the area around it, were used by private companies as well as for security in the tent that hosted speaker Dr. Ben Carson. The Sentry Pods did their jobs and caught one instance of burglary on camera. When asked if he felt the Sentry Pods were helping keep Cleveland safe during the week of the RNC, Brent said, "Absolutely. Sentry Pods are great because they give you exponential foot power." Check out the full Cleveland 19 News clip here: <http://www.cleveland19.com/story/32493700/sentry-pods-help-keep-an-eye-out-during-rnc-week-in-cle>.



*Dr. Ben Carson in Cleveland during RNC week*

## Natasha Merrill's LuLaRoe



Ashland local Natasha Merrill has recently embraced a clothing line called LuLaRoe and has started her own home-based LuLaRoe consulting business. If you checked out the vendors at Ashland BalloonFest this year, you may have noticed Natasha promoting LuLaRoe's vibrant clothing. Natasha describes LuLaRoe as "a fashion movement that is empowering women to feel beautiful and confident." More than that, LuLaRoe gives Natasha the opportunity to work and do something for herself without sacrificing her role as a stay-at-home mother. Natasha and her husband Josh, who have been married for nine years, have two boys (ages five and seven).

Though her business is brand new, she is already experiencing success. A good portion of her business is done via online sales, which she conducts through a Facebook group called *LuLaRoe Natasha Merrill Online Boutique*. Through this, she actively reaches over 600 shoppers (and growing!) on a daily basis. In addition to online sales, Natasha hosts pop-up boutiques for shoppers and their friends at their homes. For those who do not wish to have it at their own homes, Natasha will host a boutique at her home for anyone who is local. There is no presentation and no pressure at these boutiques -- Natasha simply brings the store to her customers and provides for a fun shopping experience.

The LuLaRoe line focuses on comfort, affordability, and stylishness. The clothes are modest, yet colorful, and made to flatter all body types. One of the more popular items is their leggings, which are known for their incredible softness. Natasha's favorite item is the Julia dress, a form fitting, knee length, knit dress with mid-length sleeves and a high neckline.

## Mohican Appliance



In May, Kevin and Christine Lycans took their home-based service business to downtown Loudonville, expanding into the realm of retail and opening an official storefront.

In early 2015, Ashland Area Economic Development Director Kathy Goon helped Kevin and Christine with a plan for their envisioned business, and by March, Mohican Appliance was opened, providing appliance repair service to all types and brands of appliances. Kevin's expertise in appliance repair and the couple's shared vision of providing top-notch customer service has ensured their success in the past year. Now, they are taking their business to the next level. In addition to appliance repair, Mohican Appliance offers household appliances of all types, office supplies, TVs, computers, satellite TV, satellite internet, Vector Security systems and more. Above all, Kevin and Christine are proudest of the customer service they offer. "Our customers come first. We have both worked with other businesses and it goes back to wanting to offer the customer the best service, and we felt by doing it ourselves, we could make sure we offered what we wanted. We try to support our community the best we can," Christine explained.



**Ashland Area Economic Development • 419-289-3200 • [www.AshlandED.com](http://www.AshlandED.com)**