



April Newsletter

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Ashland County Food Enterprise Center progress continues

Ashland Economic Development received great news last week when USDA Rural Development—Massillon office—informed us that we were successful in receiving a Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG). RBEG's are used by public bodies and other non-profit entities to establish revolving loan funds or install infrastructure and house business incubators. The Ashland grant-writing team (Pump House Ministries, AED, and Ashland University College of Business & Economics) requested \$150,000 to purchase kitchen equipment for the evolving Ashland County Food Enterprise Center (ACFEC). Due to federal cutbacks in this program, all awardees in Ohio except Ashland had their request cut in half. The Pump House received \$92,850 due to the planning team's strong plan, economic forecasting tools created by AU students, and several letters of support from prospective kitchen users.

This has truly become a community project with a growing commitment from many stakeholders. The next major step in the process is an information session for prospective ACFEC Advisory Board members. They will hear the vision from Pump House Director Bruce Wilkinson and AU Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurial Studies Director Dan Fox. While we cannot guarantee a seat on the Advisory Board, citizens are encouraged to attend this informational meeting. It will be held on Wednesday, April 19th at 1:30 in AED's conference room. If you would like to attend, please contact ED Specialist Evan Scurti at 289-3200 or evanscurti@ashland-ohio.com.

Ashland Economic Development to attend CORENET Summit

As part of Ashland Economic Development's Business Attraction program, Director Martin Irvine and ED Specialist Evan Scurti will attend the CoreNet Global 2005 Summit in Toronto, Canada this month. CoreNet stands for the Corporate Real Estate Network. This event allows economic development professionals the opportunity to have direct communications and networking opportunities with high level site selectors.

To further increase the networking opportunities, Ashland Economic Development will serve as hosts at the State of Ohio's Hospitality event. Representation at the Hospitality events is a valued opportunity to meet corporate real estate professionals from around the country. Martin and Evan will attend free of charge through AED's membership to Team Ohio, the primary marketing network for Ohio.

AED is very optimistic that this event will provide coveted leads and contacts. Representation at the CoreNet summit and the Hospitality event provide opportunities to increase Ashland County's visibility among the professionals that make corporate relocation and new investment decisions.

AED would like to thank the Mohican Area Growth Foundation for their partnership and sponsorship of the travel and lodging costs. Their financial support makes it possible for AED to take advantage of this opportunity. All other costs will be covered by a grant from the Institute for Human Investment and Economic Growth.

Ohio Department of Development's Canadian Office Director Has Successful Day in Ashland

Right: Ron Straatsma, Canadian Trade Officer and Mike Lawrentz of Lawgix, International

The Ohio Department of Development's (ODOD) Director of the Toronto, Canada office enjoyed lunch with the Mayor and representatives from Custom Hoists and also visited four local businesses on March 10th. Director Ron Straatsma's visit was part of the ODOD International Trade Division's (ITD) annual effort to bring all Directors located in 10 foreign offices to Columbus and other regions to network and offer direct assistance to Ohio companies. The primary mission of these foreign offices is to facilitate Ohio companies' exporting initiatives; the offices also encourage foreign investment in Ohio.



Mr. Straatsma, International Trade Advisor Sara Smiley, and International Trade Export Advisor Tom LaPorte (located in Columbus) visited executives at Conery Mfg., Ashland Rubber Mat, Return Polymers Group, and Lawgix International. Ashland Economic Development Director Martin Irvine and ED Specialist Evan Scurti also attended the meetings and were very encouraged by these companies' progressive market strategies and entrepreneurial vision. Mr. Straatsma has plans to follow-up with each company on several issues, including finding untapped Canadian distributors and customers and researching tax policies. Mr. Straatsma has worked with other Ashland companies in the past and continues to be impressed, saying, "I strongly encourage Ashland's companies to consider international sales, including Canada. The State's ITD program is an excellent tax-funded program with most services free to Ohio companies. Our foreign offices have the capacity to evaluate many markets and opportunities. I enjoyed meeting these great Ashland entrepreneurs and learning about their successful

companies. They have already tapped into the Canadian market, and I look forward to assisting them in finding future success.”

Ashland Economic Development facilitates visits such as Mr. Straatsma’s as part of the Ashland International Business Initiative. This program is designed to provide information and networking opportunities for Ashland businesses to assist them in increasing their export sales. In Ohio, one in five manufacturing jobs is tied to exports. An export program enables businesses to capitalize on international opportunities and benefit from trade. The international initiative is part of Ashland Economic Development’s Business Retention and Expansion program.

Notice: *The Ohio Department of Development will cosponsor (with National City Bank) a one day seminar entitled "Tools and techniques for successfully expanding global business" on May 19th. For more information, please visit www.NationalCity.com/seminars.*

Johnny Appleseed Outdoor Drama Contributes to Local Economy

Johnny Appleseed Season Two Is Set to Bloom June 18th

By Debbie Sheaffer

John Chapman will again walk the forest and river valleys as the Johnny Appleseed



Outdoor Drama begins its second season on Saturday, June 18th. Nicknamed Johnny Appleseed, Chapman planted apple trees for Ohio’s early settlers. Even today, there are apple trees in the area known to have been planted by Johnny Appleseed.

The 2004 inaugural season attendance of 25,000 was the third best of Ohio’s six outdoor dramas. Over 50 motor coach tours and groups have already booked advance reservations for this season, which runs through August 25th. The drama is on stage Tuesday through Sunday beginning at 8:00 P.M.

According to the Institute of Outdoor Drama, the projected benefit to the local economy is \$12,000,000 annually. The construction of The J. M. Smucker Company Auditorium and Library and the 1,700 seat Johnny Appleseed Amphitheatre cost \$4,600,000. Each summer, the outdoor drama employs over 60 acting and technical personnel.

“Johnny Appleseed unites businesses and individuals from Ashland, Holmes, Knox, Richland and Wayne counties to preserve local history while economically benefiting the region,” stated Virginia Imhoff, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center, Inc. and President of Mansfield City Council.

Business sponsorships are available for companies wishing to join their peers as an integral part of this project. A \$1,000 sponsorship names a theatre seat and provides the company with 30 complimentary tickets. Please phone the business office at 419-525-4759 for information on sponsorships.

The elegant amphitheatre is located four miles south of Mifflin on State Route 603, just north of Charles Mill Dam. Tickets may be reserved by calling the box office at 419-368-1812 or by visiting www.SeeJohnnyAppleseed.com. Adult ticket prices range from \$16 to \$23 and children ages four through twelve at \$8 or \$9. Senior citizen discounted tickets range from \$14.50 to \$16.50.

Ohio Tax Reform Deserves Attention

As many of you are aware, the State of Ohio is looking at tax reform. While most people agree that tax reform is needed, specifics are still being debated. We would like to encourage you to add your voice and thoughts to the conversation. Please see www.jobsforohio.com for specifics of the current proposal as presented by Governor Taft. The site links to a "tax calculator" on the Ohio Manufacturers' Association website that is advertised to help businesses get an approximate forecast of their taxes under the Taft proposal. The calculator requires that numbers be entered in all required fields (if the entry is to be zero, highlight the current 0.00 and re-enter).

For contact information for local State senators and representatives, please visit www.AshlandED.com/ashlandlinks/ashlandlinks.htm.

Growing Ashland County Businesses

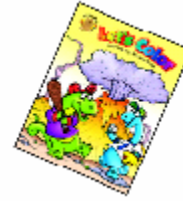


Chandler Systems, Inc.

Chandler Systems, Inc. (CSI) was founded in 1993 by Bill Chandler. In 10 years the company grew from 1 to 36 full-time employees in March 2003. These employees included panel and system builders, engineers, and customer service and support personnel. By March 2004 CSI exceeded 40 full-time employees and now employs over 60. The facility, on the corner of Cottage and Ohio Streets, was recently expanded and is filled to capacity. Consequently, CSI purchased the adjacent and recently vacated Hedstrom facility. Renovation planning is currently underway.

From the beginning CSI specialized in the manufacturing of custom electrical control systems for the wastewater industry and that remains their strength today. The Controls Division now offers a complete line of pump controls, alarms, floats, and custom designed and built control panels. In 1995 CSI Water Treatment Systems became a division of CSI. This division offers a complete line of water treatment equipment for residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial and municipal applications.

CSI's commitment to innovation is what sets it apart from its competitors. Continuously developed new products simplify, add flexibility and efficiency, and reduce costs. New products and technology has enabled CSI to keep jobs in the U.S. For example, numerous injection molding tools and in-house designed and built circuit boards allow CSI to strongly compete with foreign markets.



Bendon Publishing

Founded in 2001, Bendon Publishing is one of the fastest growing Children's Book Publishers in the world. In March 2005 the company moved into a 240,000 square-foot state of the art distribution center that formerly housed the Pentair South (Hydromatic) plant. This facility allows Bendon to ship on time, every time as well as achieve great efficiency by partnering with local vendors. Bendon's early success is due to its simple philosophy of listening to the customer and giving them what they want. The ownership team has a dedication to the market and a strong sense of what kids find interesting and fun with their combined 50 + years experience in children's publishing.

Bendon holds national and worldwide licenses for the exclusive production of some of the most recognizable children's books, including: *Sesame Street*, *Disney*, *Arthur*, *Barbie Education*, *Barney*, *Bear in the Big Blue House*, *Bob the Builder*, *Kim Possible*, *Lizzie McGuire*, and at least a dozen others.

Between the office staff and fulfillment center Bendon is responsible for 50 full-time employees, most of which are Ashland County residents. The company has ambitious growth plans as well as a plan to become a major community leader for years to come. Their sales grew by over 300% in 2004 and are on track to double sales in 2005. Ashland Economic Development would like to congratulate all of the employees and owners on their successful move to a new facility and thank them for their investment in Ashland.

Note: AED Congratulates Lippert Industries on their planned Expansion

Lippert Industries plans to construct a 105,000 sq. ft. addition to their current warehousing space. This results in an investment of \$1.8 million in Ashland and the planned creation of at least 2 new full time jobs. A CRA agreement and compensation agreement were recently finalized to encourage this development.

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