

## The Events Committee

An incredible group of individuals help to orchestrate some of our larger events. They include:

- Mindy Starr, *Chair*  
*Mantonya Chiropractic Services*
- Nathan Arnold,  
*Velvet Ice Cream Company*
- Mike Birkmeyer,  
*Madison-Collins-Stephens Agency*
- Jennifer McDonald,  
*L.C. Chamber of Commerce*
- Brittany Misner,  
*L.C. Chamber of Commerce*
- Natasha Platt,  
*L.C. Chamber of Commerce*
- Kendra Proudfit,  
*DoubleTree by Hilton*
- Carol Thress,  
*Explore Licking County*
- Amy Treciak,  
*Electronic Data Payment Systems*



# Annual Events

Attending and sponsoring Chamber programs and events gives you the opportunity to connect with leaders, offer your voice to influence the policies that affect your business, and educate yourself on ways to improve your bottom line. The Licking County Chamber of Commerce is your conduit to the contacts, events, and resources that help you grow your business.

The Licking County Chamber of Commerce hosts numerous events and programs throughout the year. A synopsis of each annual event or programming series is detailed below:

### Groundhog Breakfast

Our largest annual event, with upwards of 1,000 in attendance, featuring an economic forecast, updates, major keynote speaker, and the John Alford Community Service Award.

### Business After Hours

These monthly gatherings are the best place to do face-to-face networking and learn more about the business hosting the mixer.

### Rockin' Auction

This fun, free event prominently features local businesses along with exciting live and silent auction items. This night out serves as a "thank you night" for all our members!

### Lunch & Learn

These events focus on a key topic relevant to our members' needs, presented by subject matter experts. Featuring sponsorship opportunities, Lunch & Learns are held throughout the year.

### Candidates Night

Each fall, the Chamber hosts an evening featuring select state, county, and/or local races where candidates are given an opportunity to answer questions pertaining to business issues.

### Local Leaders Events

At these quarterly networking events, our members hear from the top leaders in their field on a given subject, from elected officials to economic development experts, and walk away with a better understanding of the topics and issues that impact our business community.

### Biz Fest & Taste of Licking County

This annual business expo features an "event theme," with over 50 businesses and restaurants. Exhibiting members are offered sponsorship opportunities and networking with 400+ attendees.

### A Slice of Licking County - Party on the Roof

The "Slice" offers a variety of pizza, calzones, flatbread, a beer & wine garden and live music all atop the downtown parking garage overlooking the Canal Market district with 1,000 in attendance.

### Annual Awards Dinner & Celebration

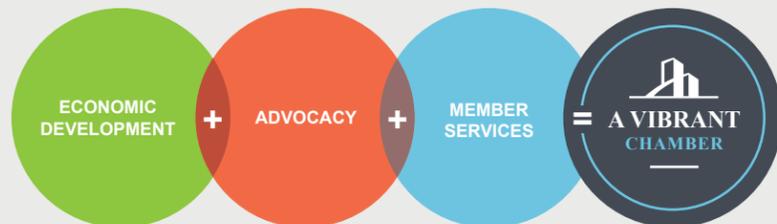
This annual dinner marks the end of the Chamber's fiscal year. It is the official "changing of the guard," as well as a podium to present area companies/organizations/individuals with special recognition. The dinner also features a keynote presentation to the Chamber membership.

### Annual Membership Golf Outing

An enjoyable golf outing, with 20-30 teams in a scramble format, dinner and awards, held at one of our many Chamber member golf courses. The event includes sponsorship opportunities.

### Brew & Wine Fest

One of your Chamber's largest networking events! Featuring samplings of wine and micro-brewed beers, appetizers from local restaurants, entertainment and sponsorship opportunities.



## CONTACT:

### Licking County Chamber of Commerce

50 West Locust Street, P.O. Box 702, Newark, OH 43058-0702

p. 740.345.9757

f. 740.345.5141

www.lickingcountychamber.com



# THE LICKING COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Annual Report

## A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE ISSUES AND EFFORTS OF YOUR CHAMBER



**Our Mission:** The Licking County Chamber of Commerce is a business organization that supports our member businesses and advances the economic well being of the Licking County community.

# Chamber Staff



## From the Chairman

A year of new transitions, collaborations and programs



JENNIFER McDONALD  
PRESIDENT & CEO



MANDY RECTOR  
OFFICE MANAGER



BRITTANY MISNER  
MEMBERSHIP &  
AFFILIATES DIRECTOR



NATASHA PLATT  
MARKETING DIRECTOR



NATE STRUM  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DIRECTOR



JILLIAN RINE  
PROJECT ASSOCIATE



Dan McVey  
Chairman of the Board

This has been another exciting year of service for your Licking County Chamber of Commerce. It has also been a year of transitions – of leadership, staff, events and programming. Through this transition and a sincere commitment to our members by the Chamber board and staff, I believe service to members of the business community has become reinvigorated. The newly organized staff is enthusiastic, energetic and focused on delivering service, programs and collaborative initiatives to provide the most value for your membership. Below are just a few ways the Chamber works for you.

The Chamber provides a multitude of educational opportunities for its members. Exposure to best practices, legislative initiatives and ways to market your business are just a few of the topics available through our Local Leaders programs offered throughout the year. We also offer members the opportunity to gain comprehensive knowledge of the community along with personal skill development, through our Community Leadership program, which will welcome 30 eager participants this fall.

Education and best practices, along with peer-to-peer networking are also at the core of the Chamber's Affiliates program. Our affiliate groups are organized as part of the Chamber to serve targeted member needs. We're proud of the work of the Chamber's Manufacturers Council, Safety Council, Human Resource Management Association and Workenomics, which have continuously offered programming designed by and for our business community for many years. Each of these affiliates has received wide recognition beyond our county borders. We're equally proud of our newest affiliate Young Leaders of Licking County! The Chamber launched and quickly expanded the Young Leaders of Licking County initiative this past fall, whose mission is to foster the next generation of leaders in the area, by offering opportunities for networking, mentorship, education, philanthropy and leadership development. Not quite one year later, this group has already grown to 225 emerging community leaders!

Advocacy is a fundamental part of our mission to serve the Chamber membership. One of the greatest values the Chamber provides is to speak on behalf of our members on matters of public policy that may impact our local businesses. Through our Government Affairs Committee, the Chamber is committed to informing the members of upcoming elections or issues and taking positions on candidates and issues, when requested. This year, the Chamber launched a new "Advocacy in Action" newsletter as part of our commitment to keep our members informed and engaged on public policy matters.

The Chamber continues to be a facilitator of new investment and business retention and expansion. One of the primary ways we support economic development is through the efforts of GROW Licking County CIC. The mission of GROW is to provide clients with responsive and individualized economic development support to enable businesses to expand or relocate in Licking County, Ohio. GROW Licking County serves as the front door of the community – welcoming development, connecting resources and increasing opportunities. We're proud of the results of this initiative, which include the creation of 3,800 new job opportunities, retention of 1,700 existing jobs and facilitation of over \$620 million in direct investment throughout our county.

A hallmark of your Licking County Chamber is the opportunity to attend some of the greatest events you'll ever experience! The Chamber offered nearly 40 events for our members this past year. These included Business After Hours events, designed to showcase local members' businesses and connect members one-on-one. Additionally, the Chamber's signature member events – the Annual Biz Fest, Rockin' Auction, Annual Brew & Wine Fest, our world-famous Groundhog Breakfast and our newest event – The Slice of Licking County – all drew record crowds. We strive to create opportunities for our members to meet and learn about one another in many different environments.

Finally, the Chamber, just like all our exceptional member businesses, is committed to organizational excellence. Last year the Chamber was awarded the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Accreditation with a four-star designation. Accreditation is one of the highest honors afforded to chambers and reflects achievement in the support of pro-growth activities and economic policies at the federal, state and local level. Accreditation is another testament to the strength of the Chamber staff and board. We're humbled and proud to provide this high level of service to each of our existing members and to the 95 NEW members who joined the Chamber this past year – a 6% net growth in membership!

These are just a sampling of the services, programs and achievements of YOUR Licking County Chamber of Commerce this past year. It is a true team effort. I would like to thank all the Chamber Board members for volunteering their time and energy to provide leadership for the organization. I would also like to thank the Chamber Ambassadors for their efforts to share the message of the many benefits of Chamber membership. I encourage everyone to find a way to get involved with the Chamber.

## Affiliates

### Licking County Safety Council

The Licking County Safety Council serves 165 members, representing over 20,000 employees, and is led by the following Steering Committee/Officers:

- Michael Albanese, Advanced Business Communications
- Rhonda Church, Ohio BWC
- Michael Coates, Ohio BWC
- Paul Kaple, Rehab Associates
- John Lutz, Newark Digital Academy
- Steve Melroy, Tectum Inc.
- Brittany Misner, Licking County Chamber of Commerce
- Ben Moore, Ohio BWC
- Don Owens, Owens Corning
- Mary Lou Rauch, Covestro
- Nic Rine, Licking Memorial Occupation Health
- Valorie Spanovich, Star Wipers

The Council reports to the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation Division of Safety & Hygiene as part of its Safety Campaign. This year, 145 awards

were given to local companies - in recognition of their safe workplace achievements - at the Annual Awards Luncheon in May. The Council launched the first ever HR and Safety Expo this past summer, featuring a nationally recognized speaker, 30 exhibitors and an attendance well over 200 people. The Council also launched a re-branding this year, featuring a user-friendly website and a new logo.



The first annual HR & Safety Expo was held at The Reese Center in June of 2017. This successful event featured over 30 exhibitors and saw more than 200 in attendance.

SHRM organization. The board includes: Sheri White, Golfworks; Jill Evans, Park National Bank; Heather Geiger, MPW; Angela Carnahan, Ohio Means Jobs; Heather Wiley, Park National Bank; Brittany Misner, Chamber representative and Tracey Wolfe, Licking County Library.

### Manufacturers' Council

Made up of owners and managers from our community's manufacturing firms, the group supports the growth and development of manufacturing in Licking County. The Manufacturers' Council serves as a sounding board for business trends, workforce development, operational ideas, and best practices to facilitate industrial growth. The group meets monthly, at member locations throughout Licking County.

### Community Leadership

The Community Leadership program of Licking County is in its 35th year and graduated 24 students in 2017. The purpose of the 9-month program is designed to strengthen individual leadership skills; expand knowledge of community challenges and opportunities, resources, and to create a county-wide leadership network of current and former participants. This program is a catalyst to identify and develop leaders who will strengthen our community through active engagement.



### Young Leaders of Licking County

Launched in the fall of 2016, the mission of the Young Leaders of Licking County is to foster the next generation of leaders, aged 21-40 in Licking County, offering opportunities for networking, mentorship, education, philanthropy and leadership development. As a successful Chamber, it is truly our goal to foster Licking County's next generation of leaders. Through this new initiative, we are offering them a meaningful experience that will enhance their workplace, economy, and overall quality of life for all residents of our community. This group has already seen huge success with over 225 young professional joining Young Leaders. The group offers their members an opportunity to volunteer, meet with local CEOs and gain professional development and insight as well as make life-long connections through their social events and mentorship program.



The Young Leaders of Licking County Board Members include:

- Luke Kellet, HNLC Port Authority - President and Mentorship Committee Chair
- Matt McKenzie, First Federal Savings - President Elect
- Nathan Arnold, Velvet Ice Cream - VP of Marketing & Events Chair
- Brittany Misner, LC Chamber - Treasurer and Philanthropy Chair
- Christy Kaminski Strum, Park National Bank - Secretary
- Jillian Rine, Grow Licking County - At Large
- Jeremy Blake, Denison University - At Large
- Holly Pahoundis, Skylight Financial Group - At Large
- Nicole Arnold, RevLocal - At Large

### Workenomics™

An affiliate of the Chamber, Workenomics™ is a weaving of workforce development and economic development efforts designed to respond to business workforce needs in Licking County. Workenomics™ introduces Licking County's already-strong workforce development system at the start of the corporate expansion and/or site location decision-making process.



## FAST FACTS

- The Chamber facilitated over 40 events featuring member businesses over the past year and saw a record attendance of approximately 4,600 guests. Two of our events were sold out, with record crowds - the 7th Annual Brew & Wine Fest and 2nd Annual Slice of Licking County! Our Biz Fest trade show and taste of the county offered nearly 400 visitors a look into local business and industry featuring 50 vendors with a Mardi Gras theme! In May, the Chamber hosted the largest yet Cinco de Mayo Pub Crawl, bringing 300 people into downtown Newark.
- 156,779 business searches were conducted via the Chamber's online Directory last year. That is more than double the figure from the previous year. Website users clicked through to over 8,900 member website links.
- The Chamber's Jobs Page received over 24,000 hits from job seekers this past year and has advertised 178 local positions.
- The Chamber membership represents over 30,695 full time employees; and an additional 1000 companies are represented as associate members.
- The Chamber staff and ambassadors assisted in 17 ribbon cutting ceremonies and 1 groundbreaking event over the past year.
- The Chamber increased in membership by 6% with 95 new members - growing our membership base to 807.
- The sixth edition of the PROUD magazine debuted in 2017 and offers engaging articles about economic development, arts, health-care and the business climate. The magazine is available at the Chamber office and online at [www.newarkadvocate.com](http://www.newarkadvocate.com).



## Promoting our members and providing meaningful benefits is a key area of focus for the Chamber staff and directors.

Offering member benefits that afford opportunity for our members to grow continues to be our primary area of focus. We gauge the success of our programming by conducting a yearly membership survey and hearing directly from our members and ambassadors on the value of the programs, benefits and events we offer. We received positive feedback on meeting the needs of our members and we continue to change and adapt based on our continual feedback.

This year, we offered even more events and programs, each customized to provide real business value, through issues-based roundtables, marketing trade shows, and diverse networking events. Our Chamber events are designed and often re-invented to meet the needs and interests of our broad-based membership. Our members connect with other professionals, interact to gain insights from business and government leaders, and deepen their understanding of issues relevant to our business community. This year we produced and hosted record crowds and participation at many of our signature events, including The Brew & Wine Fest, BizFest, Rockin' Auction and the 2nd Annual Slice of Licking County, which affords our members and members of the community to discover new business opportunities, share ideas and make new connections.

The Chamber continues to provide opportunities for our members to gain exposure and promote their business and services. We have made a concerted effort to expand and enhance our technical and social media offerings, affording our

members the ability to take advantage of the increased opportunity to upload news releases, hot deals, job listings, add keywords, to keep their member profile interesting and up-to-date. Our Facebook followers share and comment daily, on our member news releases, job openings and hot deals that are fed through our website and shared by our staff. Our Marketing and Membership Director made a concerted effort to gain followers on our social media sites, and we grew our outreach by 30% - gaining 450 followers on Facebook alone - and in turn increasing our members reach and visibility greatly.

Our Membership and Affiliates Director hosted quarterly and impromptu "Chamber 101" orientation sessions for members throughout the year. Originally designed with new members in mind, this program expanded its reach to all members interested in learning how to maximize their membership experience. Additionally, this program was marketed to an even broader audience at the Workforce Summit, further expanding our reach and information.

The Chamber continues to work with, and for, our members to maximize your benefits and exposure. We are encouraged both by our feedback and our increased member retention rate - rising to 92 percent this year! We feel that all of our benefits cross a wide range, from referrals to advertising opportunities, trade show booths to sponsorships, networking face-to-face and social media exposure. Each of them selected, designed and oftentimes re-invented with our members in mind.

# THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Charting the Course for the Chamber of Commerce



These men and women set the direction of our Chamber's service and activities. At the Board & Staff retreat these Directors updated and re-developed a strategic GPS - Goals, Plans and Strategies - for the year. We're proud to report that each goal was achieved.



**Dan McVey**  
*Chairman*  
The Energy Cooperative



**Ryan West**  
*Chair-Elect*  
First Federal Savings



**Heather Powell**  
*Treasurer*  
TrueCore Federal Credit Union



**Luke Baus**  
*Past-Chair*  
Project Construction Company



**Megan Evans**  
Licking County Foundation



**Nathan Arnold**  
Velvet Ice Cream Company



**Lori Hubble**  
Buckeye Skilled Trades



**Lee Heckman**  
Reese, Pyle, Drake & Meyer, P.L.L.



**Patrick Jeffries**  
Individual



**Todd Harrold**  
Centratech



**Andrew Guanciale**  
Coldwell Banker King Thompson



**Laura Lewis**  
Park National Bank



**Mike Birkmeyer**  
Madison-Collins-Stephens Agency



**Sharad Thakkar**  
Polymer Technologies





# Economic Development

## GROW Licking County Facts & Stats:

In the past year, GROW Licking County received 106 leads inquiring about investing in Licking County. The staff submitted 128 property responses to those leads.

Areas of focus include:

- Logistics and Distribution
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Science & Technology Development
- General Business Operations

Big Wins for 16/17 include:

- AEP Transmission Regional Distribution Center being constructed on 100 acres near Broad Street within the City of Pataskala's Job Ready Site. AEP's total investment in the new distribution center will total an estimated \$20 million.
- Cost Less Lighting in the Etna Corporate Park is expanding their footprint to include a new 60,000 square foot manufacturing space, enabling 20 new job opportunities for Western Licking County.
- Bleckmann, USA beginning operations at the Johnstown Commerce Park with a \$3.5 million investment in 175,000 square foot distribution center. The 200 new positions include warehouse operations and production as well as administrative management jobs.

Since 2012, GROW Licking County has aided in:

- Creation of 3,800 new jobs
- Retention of 1,700 existing jobs
- Facilitated private investment in excess of \$620 million

## Implementing development, change and investment

Economic development has been, and always will be, a core mission of the Chamber of Commerce. We are proud to play a pivotal role in facilitating the growth of economic development opportunity in Licking County, and working in partnership throughout our county to advance opportunities.

The Chamber continues to participate in economic development opportunities through our partnerships with GROW Licking County Community Improvement Corporation and the Newark Development Partners Community Improvement Corporation (NDP). These organizations are dedicated to leading the community's efforts to secure investment, projects, and opportunities that can continue our community's transformation.

We're proud to partner with NDP to change the face, and pace, of Downtown Newark. The Chamber featured the exciting work of NDP as part of our annual Groundhog Breakfast video. Recent development successes include:

- Successful completion of another phase of the Downtown Streetscape project;
- Additional loft housing units developed and introduced in Downtown Newark;
- New dining, entertainment, and service businesses now calling Downtown Newark "home";
- The donation of the Newark Commerce Center office facility to NDP, from the Murphy family. This location, just beyond Downtown, allows NDP to relocate its operations center and expand its footprint and impact on the community.

The Chamber's partnership with GROW Licking County continues to impact our entire county. This past year, GROW

engaged Research On Investment (ROI) as a site selection partner for our community, to help us target industry sectors and opportunities for new investment success. Armed with ROI's analysis, CIC representatives visited site selection and business leaders throughout the country, and in Europe, to present the story of all Licking County has to offer expanding businesses.

GROW Licking County is also partnering with The Montrose Group, based in Columbus, to create a county-wide Economic Development Action Plan. This process, funded by a Defense Manufacturing Assistance Program grant, is focusing on three key economic drivers for our community: Workforce Development, Infrastructure, and Transportation. We look forward to engage our community partners in this important process throughout the remainder of 2017.

Engaging the community is also a focal point of GROW Licking County's "ED 101" Initiative. This internationally-recognized program is designed to educate and engage community leaders regarding economic development strategies, processes, and ways to become partners in the business of economic development. The second annual "ED 101" program was presented to a "packed house" again this past year.

The Chamber takes economic development seriously, and our commitment to it is a significant. We will continue to actively support, and participate in, economic development programs and projects that are designed to improve and expand opportunities for our neighbors, and continue to transform our community.

The Chamber takes economic development seriously, and our commitment to it is a significant. We will continue to actively support, and participate in, economic development programs and projects that are designed to improve and expand opportunities for our neighbors, and continue to transform our community.



## Advocacy

Our focus is local; our vision is global.

This past year was a busy one, once again, for our Government Affairs Committee. Last fall, candidates for the Ohio House of Representatives 71st District - Scott Ryan and Joseph Begamy - as well as candidates for the position of Licking County Prosecuting Attorney - Bill Hayes and Christopher Shook - were featured at the Chamber's annual Candidates Night." A packed house at the Doubletree by Hilton heard from these individuals, and left with more information on each of the options before voters on Election Day.



Pataskala Mayor, Mike Compton explained the plans for the city at the Local Leaders Breakfast.

Our Local Leaders events focused on many ideas, issues and topics. We led off the year featuring the "Forty under 40" as highlighted through the Newark Advocate. We also introduced the new Young Leaders program and heard from 3 local entrepreneurs under the age of forty. The Chamber held an informative CEO update featuring 8 leaders representing a variety of fields in the community. The morning was filled with insightful updates. Our third was on the topic of Economic Development around the County and featured representatives from Johnstown, Pataskala and Buckeye Lake who have a role to play in economic development. It was a morning where everyone learned something new. Our last Local Leaders event will be held August 30, 2017

on the topic of Non-Profits and their importance in the community. This topic is very important to the citizens of the county. You won't want to miss it!

This year, the Chamber endorsed two ballot issues through Board action and the recommendation of our Government Affairs Committee: the County 911 Levy and the Licking

Park District Renewal Levy. In addition, the Chamber staff started the "Advocacy in Action" e-newsletter to keep our members informed of all issues that may affect their business.

The Government Affairs Committee is very active and meets monthly. Its members do not take lightly their responsibility to represent our members, and act as THE VOICE of Business! This committee consists of the following individuals: Luke Baus, Project Construction Company; Tom Cumiskey, Park National Bank; Tim Fitterer, Truck One; Caroline Fraker, MedBen; Jamie Garrabrant, TrueCore Federal Credit Union; Andrew Guanciale, Coldwell Banker/King Thompson; Patrick Guanciale, Coldwell Banker/King Thompson; Todd Harrold, Centratch; Jeff Harris, Walker Promotion; Jennifer McDonald, Chamber; Mike Massaro, Individual; Jim Mitchell, Morgan Stanley Wealth Management; David Morrison, Morrison & Bindley; and Ryan West, First Federal Savings.

## Chamber awarded 4-Star Accreditation by U.S. Chamber of Commerce

In the fall of 2016, after an intensive and comprehensive self-assessment, the Licking County Chamber was ecstatic to receive 4-Star Accreditation by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This prestigious honor acknowledges the professional policies and extensive programming offered by our Chamber, and places us among the top 3% of chambers recognized nationwide.

The only national program recognizing chambers for their effective organizational procedures and community involvement, Accreditation allows chambers of commerce a benchmark system by which to review, improve, and promote sound business practices, policies, and procedures.

The Licking County Chamber initially received Accreditation status in 2011 and improved our ranking significantly, to elevate to the 4-Star distinction. We're very proud of the growth and progress and the elements that secured our organization this improved status, which included the Chamber's significant and documented efforts in advocating for the business community, the presence of an excellent Marketing & Communications Plan and successful efforts to diversify and increase non-dues revenue sources.

This designation demonstrates the Chamber's competency in 9 core areas, ranging from finance to facilities. The result of our on-going hard work and documentation is evidenced by this impressive rating. Our entire organization, and each of our members, should be proud of this milestone achievement.