

MCEDC January Newsletter 2020



It's been more than 150 years since Huntington Bank was founded in Ohio. Since then, it has grown into one of the largest and most respected banks in the Midwest, with \$109 billion in assets and a network of branches and ATMs across seven states. Huntington's purpose is to help make people's lives better, help businesses thrive, and strengthen the communities they serve. Thanks to its growth, Huntington has been able to continuously invest in communities through the Huntington Charitable

Grant Program, financial education and volunteerism.

"We believe that developing relationships and investing in local nonprofit organizations builds healthy and vibrant communities," says Ron Paydo, Community President of Huntington Bank's Medina County market.

"Looking out for people means proactively caring those we serve. We notice when our customers are facing a challenge and we step in to help."

Huntington and its affiliates provide consumer, small business, commercial, treasury management, wealth management, brokerage, trust, and insurance services. Huntington also provides auto dealer, equipment finance, national settlement, and capital market services.

State of Business in Medina County

To kick off what is promising to be a very productive year ahead, Bethany Dentler gave an update on the "State of Business in Medina County" at MCEDC's January member meeting.

The Medina County Economic Development Corporation team conducts over 200 business visits each year, and from those visits, gain insight into what is happening in the business community.

One primary conclusion drawn from this outreach is that Medina County truly is a unique place to do business. With over 3,500 hours invested in talking to companies and discussions with regional partners, Medina County is seeing more growth and more investment than the rest of the region. Dentler believes it is because as a county, we truly collaborate and reach out to resources when needed: "Our companies talk to us and each other and that helps solve problems while they are still small, which brings opportunities to the table."

2019 Expansion Results

Companies that chose to expand or build in Medina County invested \$224 million in new capital projects, resulting in 218 new jobs created and over \$3.3 million in new payroll in Medina County. MCEDC helped 47 companies in 2019, which is up 56% from a typical year.

Current Trends & Outlook

78% of executives visited report that they are growing, while 21% report they are stable. Only 1% indicate they are reducing. Regarding their perception of the local business environment, 96% of companies have a positive outlook.

The majority of companies MCEDC met with are still seeing orders coming in strong, and most business are continuing to plan for growth. There are small pockets of slowdowns but they appear to be very isolated.

To hear more about the economic outlook for 2020, plan to join MCEDC at our Annual Meeting on February 25 for a keynote presentation from Guhan Venkatu of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. Register [here](#).

Over the last three years, MCEDC has visited 871 companies. About half of those visits were with members. Breaking the visits down by industry, manufacturing had the most visits at 37%, followed by Real Estate & Construction companies, then by Professional Services.

Approximately 74% of visits require follow up, including referrals to resources for growth, introducing companies to others in the county, and workforce solutions. When this data is analyzed, it isn't just looking at new jobs or adding square footage. MCEDC looks at productivity. With extremely low unemployment, the more companies can do to improve their productivity without adding additional staff is key to long term strategy.

Workforce continues to be our number one discussion topic. A very distant second are tariffs and third are new projects. Companies are still looking for more staff, and with unemployment at an all-time low of 2.8%, MCEDC has gotten creative to help them find those people.

When it comes to workforce, Medina County companies have embraced training people to learn how to do the job the way their employer wants (and not bring bad habits from other places). This also means an employee starts at an entry level job and moves their way up, giving them a career path and opportunities for advancement. Because of this, Medina County sees less turnover in our companies as a whole than other communities.

During MCEDC's 2019 business outreach, a number of executives expressed concerns about the impact of federal tariffs. MCEDC engaged with our federal congressional delegation to discuss the challenges the tariffs have posed, sharing those concerns with US Senators Bob Portman and Sherrod Brown, as well as Congressmen Anthony Gonzalez and Bob Gibbs.

Dentler closed the meeting with a thank you to companies that MCEDC visits. Without their willingness to share what is going on in their businesses, MCEDC could not bring solutions to the table.

Success of Workforce Initiatives

A number of workforce initiatives have resulted from taking action on needs expressed during these visits. WorkLocal.net is going on the fourth year of providing job seekers with direct connections to Medina County job listings. MCEDC has moved the needle on helping people realize there are quality jobs right here in their own communities and expect the data to reflect that when it is released this summer.

The Everybody Works movement is in its third year and brings together agencies which work candidates from throughout the county who typically have barriers to employment and are helping them overcome those challenges. Medina County's companies have really stepped up to hire these people and it is benefiting the entire community.

The Everybody Works website – EverybodyWorksMedinaCounty.org – will launch January 31. Businesses can use this site to connect with organizations working with candidates and learn about incentive programs and other assistance available when hiring these populations. Over 70 companies have already signed up to be listed as a Second Chance Employer. To be included on this list, contact Kathy Breitenbucher at kathyb@medinacounty.org.

Two MCEDC events from the past few years – the Employer Resources Expo and the Workforce Summit – will be combine this year into the Workforce Resources Expo. That event will be held August 6 at Blue Heron Event Center.

With workforce continuing to be an issue, MCEDC will continue to find ways to help. Now that the county resources have been mapped and organizations are working together, MCEDC is branching out to see what can be done to bring more workers into Medina County.

Member News

Congratulations to Matt Baker of DS Benefits Group on his appointment to the Better Business Bureau Board of Directors in Akron!

Critchfield, Critchfield, & Johnston, Ltd. has elected five attorneys to the firm's membership. The new partners are: Daniel P. Calvin, Ann E. Salek, Chad B. Yoder, Kimberly L. Hall, and Eric T. Michener. Congratulations all!

Congratulations to Commissioner Pat Geissman on being named to the Board of Directors of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio!

Rea & associates has donated over 34K pounds of food over the last 16 years due to their friendly competition, internally. Each office collects food and donations and the winning office gets to donate an extra \$500 to the charity of their choice and receives the coveted "Help Can Hunger" trophy. We're counting on the Medina location to bring home a win in 2020!

Soprema, Inc. has created a scholarship program that grants \$5,000 to students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in architecture, engineering, construction management, or similar building fields at accredited four-year colleges or universities. More information is available here.

Discount Drug Mart announced they are expanding their partnership with MetroHealth to provide more health care clinics in their stores. Locations will be announced by the end of first quarter.

Congratulations to Mark Lapikas, CPA of Apple Growth Partners for being named an Achievements in Excellence Award from NMSE Akron / Canton!

Please Consider Participating!

McDonald Hopkins is conducting our 10th annual Business Outlook Survey to determine your opinions concerning business conditions. The new year brings many opportunities and challenges, which we are hoping, through this survey, you will help us identify. We look forward to reporting back to you with this year's results.

Please answer the brief survey by clicking on the link below.

2020 Business Outlook Survey

https://survey.mcdonaldhopkins.com/surveys/2020-business-outlook-survey?utm_campaign=Survey%20-%20Business%20Outlook&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=81904517&hsenc=p2ANqtz--n0DwAJhIGCxDS_z24IiV3F0dxDS9iXeOvMj_9Y34LTE2R_oTrm8GC9_dv0xaYPz_SaZ4hGqJ1ndPyFrXlBi5mPwy6wA&hsmi=81904517

MCEDC

Energy Program Utility Bill Audits

Just the word "AUDIT" can conjure up bad images. It doesn't have to when it comes to utility bill audits. There many types of utility bill audits, but which are the most likely to yield savings on your utility bills – and in some cases, recoveries of your past over-payments?

Commercial Electric Account Rate Audits identify opportunities to reduce costs by implementing alternative rate options, correcting billing errors, and adjusting contract demands where applicable.

Monthly Exception Audits review monthly utility bills for correctable billing errors and issues pertaining to data integrity.

Security Deposit Liability Audits look at security deposit and bond liabilities annually to see where they can be reduced.

Water/Sewer Account Audits identify opportunities to reduce monthly costs from billing errors, possible leaks, landscaping metering installs, and potential unnecessary accounts.

For more information, contact Rick Davidson at rdavidson@ceateam.com.

For every dollar in the MCEDC budget,

\$506

in economic impact is returned
to Medina County!

