

A look back and ahead for Licking County



Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner

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This past year saw continued progress in cooperation with our Community Improvement Corporation '[Grow Licking County](#)' in bringing additional development and jobs to Licking County; as well as providing new and improved county services, and remaking public buildings to better serve this growing community

In 2015 we saw a number of positive developments in the area of economic, commercial and workforce development.

Licking County took the national spotlight with the announcement that e-commerce mega business [Amazon will locate an 850,000-square-foot fulfillment center off U.S. 40 in Etna Township](#). This and a similar sized logistics center near Obetz will add some 2,000 jobs to Central Ohio. Construction on the Etna site is under way.

In addition, Vadata, a subsidiary of Amazon, announced plans to build a [\\$300-million data computing center](#) in New Albany just north of the Personal Care and Beauty Park. The 150,000-square-foot facility will employ 25 skilled employees.

Construction in New Albany included a \$175-million corporate headquarters and distribution center for Bath and Body, as part of L Brands. It is an 860,000-square-foot facility. Opening in 2016 is American Electric Power's a 195,000-square-foot transmission headquarters in New Albany. Other projects coming to this growing area include a facility for CCL Label, a maker of labels for the consumer and healthcare markets. And Axium Plastics began work to add 90,000 square feet to its container manufacturing facility.

Construction began on the long awaited redevelopment of the Ohio 16 and Cherry Valley Road interchange. The \$30-million project will be complete by late summer. In addition to being a major safety and traffic flow improvement, in this busy corridor, it will also kick start the process of developing land to the south.

Growth continues on the campus of the [Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority](#). Aerial [sic] Corp., a manufacturer of gas compressors, [began operations](#). The German based 'xperion E & E' began operations to manufacture composite auto tanks for compressed natural gas.

In the Horton Building, a multi-tenant facility, innovator [Chromocare occupied 'clean room' facilities](#). Their skilled work force of molecular biologists and clinical chemists will perform genetic testing for drug compatibility. Also, at the Port Authority industrial park site the MISTRAS Group, at year-end, moved their operations and labs from the Kaiser Building to a new \$5.2-million facility where they perform 'state of the art' metal testing.

Major expansion projects began on the campus of [MPW Industrial Systems](#) near Luray and in Utica at the [Velvet Ice Cream facilities](#) with a new freezer-distribution system related to business expansion. In the Johnstown area growth of the Apeks Supercritical resulted in a new manufacturing site in community's Industrial Park.

Grow Licking County, our County Community Improvement Corporation, hired [Nathan Strum as its director](#). A 2006 graduate of Muskingum University, Strum received his certification as an Economic Development Finance Professional from the National Development Council in 2012.

The county formed a Transportation District to work with the county engineer, the state and the private sector to funnel additional funding into the county for the design and eventual construction of needed roadway projects.

County leaders also formed the Licking County Land Reutilization Corporation or Land Bank. This new tool will allow the county and communities to acquire derelict and foreclosed properties, and using its authority bring about restoration and reuse.

The county's five-year bridge replacement and repair initiative continued with 27 bridges, either replaced or restored. Year three of this aggressive bridge restoration plan will see some \$4.3-million spent in 2016.

Tim Bubb is president of the [Licking County Commissioners](#).

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