

# Happy 2016 from ‘new guy’ at GROW Licking County Office

Nathan Strum 12 a.m. EST January 23, 2016

As 2015 winds down and 2016 starts up, I wanted to take a moment to look back at some of the region’s major economic development successes. These include:

## [GITI Tire](#)

- Announced in May 2015 — the Singapore-based company began operating out of the Prologis Park 70. With an initial job estimates of 25 new jobs, GITI Tire will be utilizing this site as its distribution facility for the entire Midwest.

## [Vadata](#)

- Announced in May 2015 — this subsidiary of Amazon.com will invest close to \$300 million in a new data center located in the New Albany Personal Care and Beauty Campus. With initial job estimates of 25 new jobs, the site is poised to expand rapidly as Amazon.com continues to grow and develop in the region.

## [Amazon.com Fulfillment Center](#)

- Announced in November 2015 – the proposed 800,000-square-foot fulfillment center is currently under construction at the Prologis Park 70. With initial job estimates of over 2,000 new jobs (between this site and another in Obetz, Franklin County), Licking County is poised to be the center of the e-commerce movement.

However, new projects — though exciting — represent just one facet of economic development. As community and business leaders, it is our responsibility to continue to grow our county’s economy organically. That said, I encourage individuals — whether you are in lease renewal negotiations or in casual conversation — to find out how Licking County can continue to support the existing businesses located right here at home.

Whether it is continued [workforce development initiatives](#), retro-fit of existing equipment, or procuring new machinery to stream line manufacturing, the partners at [GROW Licking County](#) is here to help begin, continue, or finalize these conversations. Business retention and expansion (BRE) is a critical element of any successful economic development plan and working with the existing business community to strengthen these relationships can only lead to further successes.



Moreover — and in line with this month’s edition of the [Business Advocate](#), small business and entrepreneurs are the backbone of the American economy. Unfortunately, although there is an abundance of opportunities to begin your own small business, navigating the process can be rather challenging. That is why I am a firm advocate of the services of East Central Ohio SCORE (Service Corp of Retired Executives).

SCORE’s mission is to aid the business community (as a whole) but I believe their (free) mentoring program is critical element that many entrepreneurs (and growing small businesses) overlook. In my experience, having a second opinion or some guidance cannot only help emerging business leaders but also help avoid catastrophe — and they are located right here in Newark.

For more information on East Central Ohio SCORE, please visit their website, <https://eastcentralohio.score.org/>, or call their office at 740-345-7458.

Finally, as some of you may have noted in the [headline](#) — I am the “new guy” in town, taking on the dual role of Director of Economic Development for the Licking County Chamber of Commerce & Executive Director of the GROW Licking County Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) as of Dec. 1, 2015.

As someone with some regional history here in Licking County, I look forward to reconnecting with old friends/colleagues as well as developing new relationships through the county.

*Nathan Strum is the Executive Director of Grow Licking County. He can be contacted at [nstrum@growlickingcountry.org](mailto:nstrum@growlickingcountry.org) or 740-345-9757, ext. 3.*