



Findlay · Hancock County
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Happy New Year,

Each year Dan Sheaffer and I develop a theme for the upcoming year. 2021 will be the year of communication, so what better way to start than a 2020 recap on January 1. In 2021 we will focus on communicating with our investors that are Economic Development Council members as well as potential investors within the community.

Since 2015 we have utilized the phrase “Findlay Formula” to describe our community’s ability to collaborate between business, education, government and not for profits. The Findlay Formula contributed to our ability to work with the community to keep people safe, businesses informed and open. As I look back on 2020 COVID dominated the year without a doubt but we also had many investments, innovation and leadership change within the community.

In Economic Development we measure our success in many ways. The most common method is job creation, capital investment and new construction. In 2020 there was over \$148 MM invested in our manufacturing, logistics and headquarters. Those investments resulted in over 1,700 new jobs created for those companies. There was limited new construction in 2020.

Residential Construction was not limited in Hancock County in 2020. In fact we had a record year for new construction. Projects under construction in 2020 included Pennrose at Birchaven Village, Liberty Ridge Townhomes, Blanchard Station, Crawford Station, Horizon Pointe Villas, Liberty Best Subdivision, Glenmar Subdivision, Vorst St Michael’s downtown infill, Deer Landing Subdivision and others.



Pennrose at Birchaven



Liberty Ridge Townhomes



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COVID has affected every aspect of our job at Economic Development. The relationships we have built over the past ten years allowed us to be a trusted partner while navigating the pandemic. Yes the Alliance is celebrating our 10 year anniversary!

When the Stay at Home Order was enacted there was a lot of uncertainty for employers and employees. Who was considered essential? Who determines if you are essential? How do you communicate to employees that you are essential? How do you operate in a safe environment; remotely, social distancing, PPE? What are the steps to file for a PPP and EIDL? There seemed to be many more questions than answers. Our business community banded together to understand the best ways to move forward as well as innovate to provide solutions for the pandemic.

Economic Development communicated regularly with our businesses to make sure they were getting the information that they needed. Our affiliations with the Ohio Manufacturers Association, Ohio Economic Development Association, NORED as well as our ties to local, state and federal government leaders allowed us to sift through the information and share the most important information. As the pandemic progressed it became clear that small business was going to be greatly impacted, in particular anyone in the service industry. Alissa Preston with the Convention and Visitors Bureau coordinated the restaurant, retail and hotel associations. We worked together to meet with them to learn how they were being impacted. Those meetings resulted in solutions; outdoor dining permits, catalytic loans from the revolving loan fund, distribution of PPE, CARES money grants, assistance to establish e-commerce and so many others.

Our companies worked to develop solutions for the pandemic. Valfilm has developed Deep Defense, a pioneering technology that enables plastic packaging to eliminate the coronavirus and other invisible threats. Deep Defense will begin production in Findlay soon. GVS also responded to the pandemic by ramping up production of N99, P100 and Ventilators filters. They developed the lines in April in three weeks, a process that would normally take five months. The accelerated process was made possible by regional companies assisting with the supply chain and logistics. Congressman Latta supported in getting the necessary approvals from NIOSH and other permitting agencies. GVS invested millions of dollars, increased employment by over 100 and is now supplying the national stockpile out of Findlay.

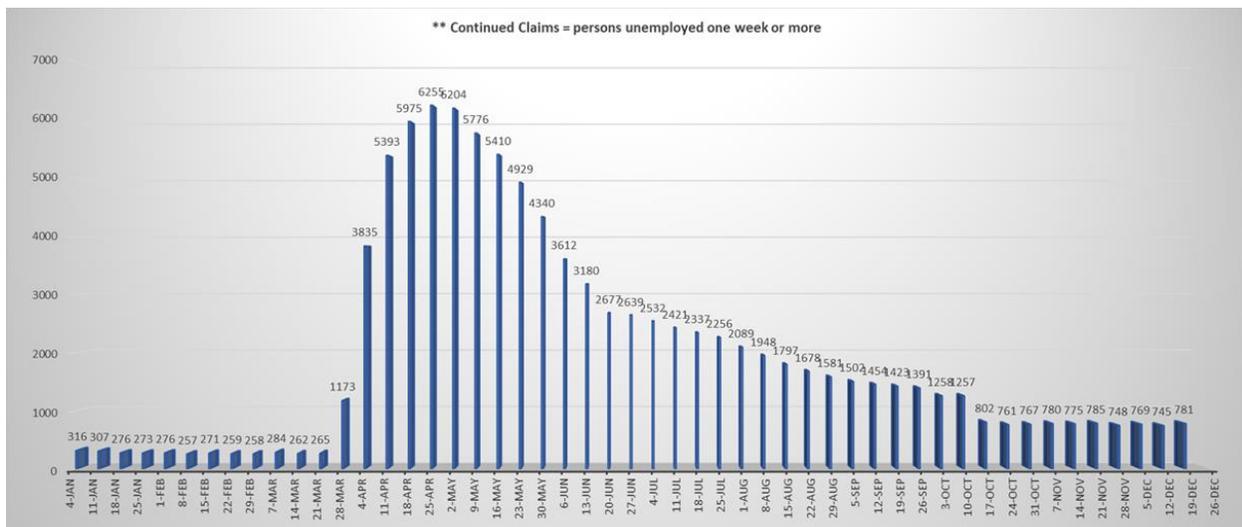


GVS P100 mask made in Findlay



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The pandemic has dramatically changed the employment and unemployment status in Hancock County and NW Ohio. We have worked closely with Ohio Means Jobs and Hancock County JFS to assist individuals that have lost their job. Unemployment peaked in May and there was a steady decline through June. Since June the numbers have seen gradual declines.



This information let us know that many people were able to get back to work quickly but some were going to be affected for an extended period of time unfortunately. As the summer progressed it became clear that business, in particular manufacturing, was recovering from the pandemic and its supply chain setbacks. As companies were coming back to production we heard from just about everyone about a shortage of employees. Many factors contributed to this including childcare, extended and additional federal benefits, increasing COVID cases and others. In response we developed FindlayMeansJobs.com. JFS Director Randy Galbraith agreed to partner with Economic Development to share this tool with every person receiving unemployment benefits. We asked those that were on unemployment to partner with Economic Development to assist them in finding employment. The website asked four questions; name/email, what industry were you in, what industry would you like to be in, pay requirements. We are early on in this process and expect to continue it past the pandemic.

In a similar way, Economic Development worked with Marathon Petroleum this fall as they announced their workforce reductions. Our goal was to work with any effected Marathon employee that would like to stay in the community. Over 80 individuals took us up on our offer and we were able to successfully keep many talented people in Findlay.



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Finally, 2020 marked a major shift of leadership within our community. Last March we were preparing to celebrate our 6th Top Micropolitan award in a row as well as say farewell to Gary Heminger. COVID did not allow us to celebrate either. Gary has been instrumental in so many ways to the success of Marathon and our community. I look forward to a time in 2021 we can have that celebration.

In addition to Gary's retirements there are many others that retired that have contributed to the success of Findlay.

- Don Templin, Marathon Petroleum
- Scott Malaney, Blanchard Valley Health System
- Don Malarky, Marathon Petroleum
- Paul Worstell, Findlay YMCA
- Kathy Kreuchauf, Community Foundation
- Duane Jebbett, Rowmark
- Ed Kurt, Findlay City Schools
- Bob LaClair, Fifth Third Bank
- Jerry Arkebauer, Blanchard Valley Port Authority
- Steve Robinson, Owens Community College

2020 certainly presented many challenges. We did end the year on a bright note with the approval of \$15 MM for flood mitigation out of the capital budget. Thank you to Senator McColley, Representative Cross, Governor DeWine and many others for supporting our efforts to address flooding.

Findlay Hancock County Economic Development is prepared for 2021. We were able to maintain a balanced budget in 2020, we have a diverse pipeline of projects for this year and we are filled with optimism that we will exit the pandemic.

Looking forward to seeing everyone this year,

Tim Mayle