



# The INSIDE

*Allen Economic Development Group*

## President's Pitch

### Expecting a positive 2021

What a challenging year 2020 was for all of us. As we reflect on the past year, I am so thankful for the collaboration, determination, and ingenuity of our partners in the business community as they pushed through the COVID-19 pandemic.



Our diverse Allen County companies adapted to the changes in workforce, production challenges, and safety protocols that were unforeseen a year ago.

Even amid the business and economic upheaval our team at AEDG and our business community remained steadfast to our mission. Our focus has always been to grow existing business, attract new business to Allen County, and foster job creation. We experienced economic and business successes throughout the year that can be

See STRATTON, page 3



## Trending upward in '21

Resiliency.

That's the overarching word for Allen County businesses in 2020. As the Covid-19 crisis came barreling down on our companies in the early spring it was resiliency that got us through.

As shown in the included graph, the county's unemployment rate was at 5.3% in January 2020 and peaked at 20.5% in April as a result of the statewide lockdown. Companies dealing with the crisis adapted to new safety protocols for employees, innovated new product lines,

and supported each other in many ways. Over 250 area companies participated in the federal PPP program for assistance. As a result, the unemployment rate returned to

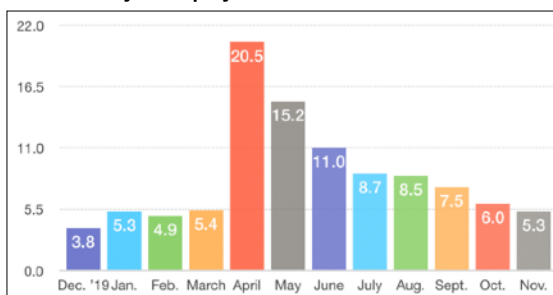
5.3% in November, according to the U.S. Bureau of labor and statistics.

Fortunately, the diversity of our county

businesses, the fortitude of owners and operators, and the resiliency of our workforce pulled us through what was hopefully the worst of times.

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Allen County unemployment rate Dec. 2019 - Nov. 2020



## 2021 Goals

### Allen Economic Development Group

Goals set for this year keep in mind the AEDG mission to create an environment for new business development, promote and nurture existing business, and facilitate the creation of new jobs. Each has its own target, however they must be in concert to achieve the best results.



## Resilient

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It is easy to see the obstacles in 2020, however Allen County had many wins in the last year.

Over \$250 million in capital investments were made and more than 260 jobs created by our largest existing companies in 2020. About \$100 million in new construction will be completed in 2021. Building permit applications totaling 3,303,117 square feet were requested in Allen County from January through November of this year. That was an increase of nearly 60% over all of 2019.

A quick review of some of the projects:

**Logoplaste:** Portugal-based plastics manufacturer, 100,000 sf, \$35 million investment, 51 new jobs

**Randall Bearings:** 90,000 sf facility for Lima company, \$6.5 million investment, 87 jobs retained

**Beer Barrel:** New location with 11,000 sf, \$3.5 million investment, 52 FTE jobs

**Perry ProTech:** New 50,000 sf headquarters, \$6.1 million investment, 78 jobs retained, 6 new jobs

**Rhodes State:** 50,000 sf training center, \$20.2 million investment

**Mercy Health:** 48,000 sf training center, \$15 million investment.

Another bright spot in 2020 was the inception of the JobsOhio Inclusion Grant program. The grants were available to small businesses located in distressed zip codes that needed some gap funding for a planned project. Seven area businesses received a total of \$250,000, resulting in 25 new jobs and the retention of 130 jobs. Funding went toward the purchase of new machinery to increase each company's capabilities and services offered.

Expectations are for a return to full capacity in all aspects of life during 2021. Goals for the year include secured funding and a development plan for a speculative building along Commerce Parkway. JobsOhio is offering grant and low-interest loan opportunities for qualifying projects. As companies look to onshore manufacturing and improve their supply chain for parts, we see our region as an ideal location. The 19+ acres along Commerce will allow for at least one 100,000 sf building with room to expand.

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## Stratton

From page 1

applauded; we know economic development is a team effort.

The AEDG team and our partners worked on development projects that totaled more than \$250 million of capital investment by businesses in our county. Even with employment fluctuating throughout the year, we still had many of our top employers creating jobs.

I want to highlight a couple of successes. In the first two quarters of the year, Ohio Cat established their business on Bluelick Road off I-75. It was also announced in July that Logoplaste, a Portugal-based manufacturer chose Allen County for its next facility with the goal of full operation in the first quarter of 2021.

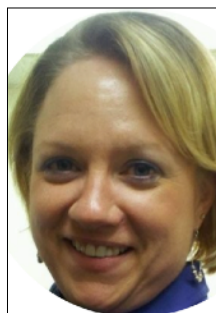
Existing companies such as Randall Bearings, Perry ProTech, and Beer Barrel announced plans to build facilities in our area. Finally, several of our largest employers have made significant capital investments, which will lead to increased employment.

In casting the vision for the future of Lima/Allen County we believe that we are positioned well for success. Our location, our infrastructure, our workforce, and our business climate are primed for development. Let's have a productive 2021 together.

## AEDG board welcomes new members

Tammy Whitlow and Kurt Alexander join the AEDG board of directors in January.

Whitlow is a vice president at Diamond Manufacturing of Bluffton. She has been with the company for more than 10 years and also has extensive experience in human resource functions. Diamond Manufacturing provides metalworking production needs to an array of manufacturers, including Automotive OEM's, Agriculture OEM's and both Tier 1 Supply Base throughout the United States.



Whitlow

Alexander is the site engineering director the Lima Proctor and Gamble plant. He has had several leadership and



Alexander

management roles during his more than 20 years with P&G, the global producer of household products. He started at the Lima facility in March 2019.

The new members will serve until December 2023. They replace Don Klausing, Hydrofresh HPP, Delphos, who was term-limited off the board, and Perry Wiltsie, Vanamatic, Delphos, who resigned.

## Ahead

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Another goal is to construct an 80,000-100,000 sf building at the site that formerly housed the EDCO fabrication company on Kibby Street. AEDG is actively trying to find an occupant for a new building. Finding a tenant will make the project eligible for the JobsOhio revitalization program and open funding to complete the remediation of the 11+ acre site. The Port Authority of Allen County has an option on the land and has completed several environmental studies on the parcel. The city has also made some investment in the lot. A plan for the location is needed before December, the expiration of the port authority's option to buy.

As always, we will continue to make visits to our existing companies to learn more about the obstacles they face and the goals they are trying to accomplish. We encourage anyone doing business in Allen County to contact the AEDG office so we can discuss available financial assistance, relationship building between you and county officials and offices, and address various workforce training and placement opportunities.

We believe the resiliency showed by all of Allen County's owners, operators, workers, and residents will continue to strengthen in the months and years ahead. We look forward to what is in store.



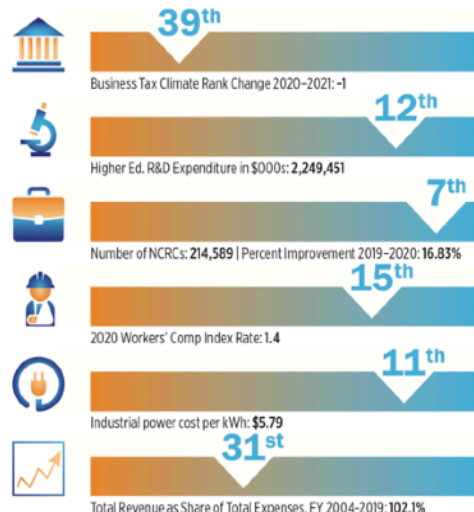
# Ohio

Pop. (2020): 11,829,645  
 Median household income (2020): \$56,352  
 Credit Rating: AA+/Stable

Pop. growth 2020–2025: 0.23%  
 Median age (2020): 40  
 Right-to-work state: No

## Legislative Update

- In March, Governor Mike DeWine announced the creation of BroadbandOhio, an office dedicated to improving access to high-speed internet across Ohio, especially to the estimated 300,000 households without it. In December, InnovateOhio released the Ohio Broadband Strategy, which among other things calls for the creation of a telehealth initiative, defines a pathway to expand access to state-owned rights of way, and utilizes the Common Sense Initiative (CSI) to improve the regulatory environment associated with expanding services.
- The Ohio Tax Credit Authority approved a clawback agreement with GM under which the automaker will repay \$28 million in incentives as a result of the idling of its Lordstown assembly plant in 2019, and another \$12 million in "Ohio Community Support" in the form of scholarships or job training at Youngstown State University or other schools in the region. In a related action, the Tax Credit Authority approved a 15-year, 1.95% job creation tax credit to Ultium Cells — a new joint venture between GM and South Korean-based LG Chem — to manufacture electric vehicle battery cells at the same Lordstown facility, where Ultium aims to create 1,000 full-time positions.



Site Selection Magazine annually compiles the data that matter to global corporate location decision-makers. The January edition offered the above information for Ohio. The Rankings That Matter include a six-point scoreboard featuring the following: Rank in the Tax Foundation's 2021 State Business Tax Climate Index (Oct. 2020), Rank in 2019 Higher Education R&D Expenditure (Total in \$000s in parentheses), Rank in percent improvement in ACT National Career Readiness Certificates earned by working-age adults between Dec. 2019 and Dec. 2020 (total number and percent improvement shown below ranking bar), Rank in Workers' Compensation Premium Rate state rankings by the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services' IT and Research Division, October 2018, Rank by Lowest Industrial Electric Power Cost (¢/kWh, EIA).

**Don't be shy; you are welcome to share this newsletter and upcoming video with coworkers, friends, and family.**



## AEDG video arriving in your inbox this month

Health concerns forced the cancelation of an annual meeting of stakeholders in December. However, we wanted to share successes of 2020 and our goals for 2021. Coming soon to your inbox is a video presentation detailing work by AEDG, the Port Authority of Allen County, and our region's leaders.

### AEDG

#### Board Members

Carol Russell  
 Cory Noonan  
 David Berger  
 Kurt Alexander  
 Eric Pohjala  
 Howard Violet  
 John Recker  
 Keith Horner  
 Ronda Lehman  
 Tammy Whitlow  
 Tim Turnwald  
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