



The INSIDE

Allen Economic Development Group



Awards show what we know

Allen County excels in manufacturing

We are excited about the business recognition Lima/Allen County has received this year. In March, Site Selection Magazine ranked us 4th in the nation for a third-tier metropolitan area for development projects. And in June, our area's manufacturing output was recognized as being 3rd in the nation for comparable sized cities and 5th in the nation for all cities.



Rank	City	City Size	Manufacturing Output Growth Rate 2015-2019 (CAGR)	2019 Manufacturing Output Per Capita	2019 Manufacturing Employment Location Quotient	Manufacturing Employment Growth Rate 2015-2019 (CAGR)	Total Score
1	Elkhart, IN	Midsized	6.1%	\$44,137	5.8	2.1%	68.9
2	Columbus, IN	Small	1.1%	\$45,901	4.6	0.8%	62.2
3	Reno, NV	Midsized	15.3%	\$7,054	1.2	18.2%	55.7
4	Sheboygan, WI	Small	3.8%	\$26,032	4.4	1.2%	51.1
5	Lima, OH	Small	2.5%	\$43,688	2.1	0.8%	50.3
6	Spartanburg, SC	Midsized	10.1%	\$15,014	2.7	7.0%	47.6
7	Decatur, IL	Small	-6.9%	\$27,839	2.7	2.4%	46.7
8	Kankakee, IL	Small	16.8%	\$21,064	1.9	5.9%	45.7
9	San Jose, CA	Large	3.9%	\$33,723	1.8	1.1%	44.0
10	Kokomo, IN	Small	-2.8%	\$25,311	3.4	-1.1%	42.9

The AdvisorSmith study on 294 U.S. cities determined the top cities where U.S. manufacturing is thriving. They based

the rankings on four key economic factors: manufacturing output growth rate, manufacturing output per capita,

manufacturing location quotient, and manufacturing employment growth rate.

See STRATTON, page 3

Business Spotlight

deSter plans for expansion

deSter Lima is emerging stronger after a tough year of challenges, including a workforce shortage that has plagued most manufacturers across the county, Ohio, and the United States. The Belgian company opened its first U.S. operations in Lima in 2017 and operates in 200,000-square-foot of space at 1200 E. Kibby St.

With headquarters in Antwerp, deSter is a leading provider of innovative food packaging and service ware concepts to the aviation, hospitality, and foodservice industry. The company designs and manufactures thermoformed and injection molded plastics, cutlery packs, condiments, glassware, ceramic, cardboard, and aluminum products. deSter is a member of gategroup, the global leader in airline catering, which employs 43,000 people worldwide.

“We have selected Lima to be our first U.S. manufacturing base because it made sense from different perspectives,” says Johnny Kattar, who was in charge of the plant setup and is currently overseeing its operation. “We had local commercial customers, as well as local and state



deSter opened its first U.S. facility in Lima in 2017 and began operations in a 200,000 square foot facility at 1200 E. Kibby St.



“I have witnessed the development of the plant and I am optimistic about what is yet to come.”

incentives such as the JobsOhio Revitalization grant and job creation incentives, as well as exceptional support from Allen Economic Development Group and other state agencies.”

The local facility focuses on products for food manufacturers and the restaurant industry. Demand

has grown rapidly, in particular the need for takeout packaging due to Covid. However, the company was not able to increase its manpower in line with production needs. To deal with the gap, they reached out to local staffing agencies and Ohio Means Jobs Allen County to make a push for employees. They also made some internal personnel changes and improved their focus on employee wellbeing.

As of this newsletter, the company has filled most of its positions and is actively working on expansion projects.

One reason AEDG was able to compile the necessary team to assist deSter with its challenges is the relationship formed between company leadership and AEDG during the location process as well as consistent Business

Stratton

From page 1

Both accolades confirm what we have known for a long time — Lima/Allen County is a productive region.

This recognition is something we can all celebrate. The manufacturing sector is one of Lima/Allen County’s strengths due to diversity, with companies producing goods in the areas of automotive, food, household goods, plastics, construction, energy, and more. The manufacturing sector is also strong because of our strategic location, lower operating costs, and well-trained workforce.

Data for both awards were compiled during 2020. Our region remained productive through the pandemic because of the resiliency and ability of our business leaders to adapt to safety protocols and convert production lines.

Challenges remain for our manufacturers, including finding workers. We need to get people back to work. As the government unemployment payments have expired, we look forward to getting more of the estimated 2,000 job openings filled.

Supply chain disruptions are another obstacle, however, through our Business Retention and Expansion visits we are learning that raw materials are beginning to be more accessible.


We are optimistic about the future of manufacturing in Lima Allen/County. We continue to have strong interest from manufacturing companies looking to locate in the region. With I-75 and U.S. 30 in our county, we are within one day’s drive of 60 percent of the population in North America. And with our agricultural roots, our family structure, and the vast academic training opportunities, our workforce is wired for manufacturing.

Makerfest, the region’s annual workforce event, returns this year in a one-day jobs fair only format. If you are an employer wanting to participate in this event, contact Barb Martin, Project Manager, Greater Lima Region, 419-231-7460 or email martinb@greaterlimaregion.com

deSter

From page 2

Retention and Expansion visits. So far in 2021, the AEDG staff has completed nearly 50 BR&Es. Is your company due for a BR&E? We want to have a discussion with you about the strengths, threats, challenges, and prospects that are facing you and your company. Reach out to AEDG; we want to talk with you!

<p>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 Tim Windau Todd Sutton</p>	 <p>AEDG Staff Dave Stratton, strattond@aedg.org Cynthia Leis, leisc@aedg.org Sue Gerker, gerkers@aedg.org www.aedg.org 419-222-7706</p>
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