



The Inside AEDG

January, 2024

The latest news, views, and announcements

INSIDE

Port Authority Board

Joe Guagenti sworn in as new board member

Partnership Collaboration

AEDG played host to an Annual Business Meeting in November.

MakerFest Success

MakerFest Your Path. Your Future. was host to over 1,300 students.



President's Pitch

Happy New Year!

It is a privilege for our team at Allen Economic Development Group to serve the Lima/Allen County community. As we look back, 2023 was a year with many successes and highlights.

At the AEDG office, we work every day to bring the right people and the right business to our area, to continue to build and grow Lima and Allen County.

Our mission is to collaborate with a community full of visionaries and achievers. This partnership brings growth to our region and communities. It is an amazing time as we pursue opportunities for the next generation.

We are focused on the opportunities and possibilities that will bring growth to our region. When it comes to economic development, if you think about where we are at, situated here in Lima, Allen County, we have a lot to offer.

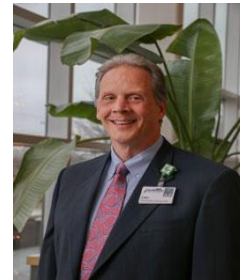
Continued on page 3

AEDG Board Members

- Eric Pohjala
- Kurt Alexander
- Chad King
- Tammy Whitlow
- Rusty Rush
- Phil Buell
- Beth Seibert
- Sharetta Smith
- Howard Violet
- Dr. Cynthia Spiers
- Tim Turnwald

AEDG Board News

I hope this article finds you in good spirits after the holidays. What a great time to be with family and friends. I am sure that you caught up with everyone on how 2023 went and look forward to what 2024 will bring.



That is where I feel we are with AEDG right now. This newsletter tells you of some of the 2023 economic successes we've had this past year. If you haven't seen the videos, please click on the link. You will be amazed with the accomplishments! <https://www.youtube.com/user/AllenCountyED>

And now AEDG is in a great position to move forward. The Board has approved its 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. Our Mission Statement continues to guide us to create an environment for new business development, to promote and nurture existing business and to facilitate and create new jobs in Allen County. Our primary and secondary goals remain in tack as the cornerstones in accomplishing this.

Continued on page 3



Partnership Collaboration

Allen Economic Development Group played host to an Annual Business Meeting in November at the Veterans Memorial Civic & Convention Center where we showcased the impressive growth in manufacturing, housing, and making Lima/Allen County a place to consider for future business growth.

We have put a lot of work into making Allen County an attractive place for development, but we were building on the strengths the region already had.

We spotlighted many projects and showed the importance of collaboration that is needed for a thriving community to grow. We want people to share in the success of Lima/Allen County.

In the past four years, AEDG has made considerable progress in economic, business and community development in Allen County. During this period, we have been preparing various sites in the region for growth and development.

The team at AEDG is working in collaboration with current partners, and prospective ones, to cast a vision for these projects.

The leadership at the county and city levels has been supportive of this development, and our partnerships at the state and federal levels are strong.

One of the projects we are proud of is the removal of the EDCO building, which was an eyesore on East Kibby Street for many years. The Ohio Department of Development awarded \$858,000 through the Brownfield Grant process in 2022.

Starting in 2023, Ben's Construction was awarded the contract for the cleanup, which was finished in June.

Now entering 2024, AEDG is beginning the process of finding a valuable commercial partner for the new plot.

Another big success for AEDG in 2023 was the transformation of the Allen County Home property, located on State Route 81, near Ottawa Metro Park.

The Ohio Department of Development awarded \$710,000 for remediation through the Brownfield Grant Program in 2022. The demolition of the property began in September of 2023 and finished in November.

With the blight removed, AEDG has begun casting a vision for the property. Renewing the property for the next generation is our number one goal. At this time, we are considering constructing quality, market-rate housing.

Because of this development, and the close partnerships we have formed, we are entering the new year in a great position, and all of that work is about to pay dividends for Allen County.

We have already seen immense growth in our region, and there is even more excitement to come in 2024!

The videos from the Annual Business Meeting can be found on our website and our YouTube Channel at www.aedg.org. Special thanks to Video Branch for producing the videos.

Look for more videos in the coming months.



Go to our website at www.aedg.org



News from the Port Authority

Joe Guagenti, a lifelong resident of Allen County was appointed to the Port Authority board in September to complete the 7-member board. Joe has a 25-year career as a licensed realtor and has served as a member of the American Township Zoning Commission for the past sixteen years. Joe will be a valuable addition and asset to the board.

Over the past year, the Port Authority of Allen County, in collaboration with the Allen Economic Development Group was successful in the brownfield clean-up at the former Edco Tool site and the Allen County Home where redevelopment is planned in the near future. Additionally, the Port Authority worked toward preparing large sites of 150+ acres for future business development in American and Perry Townships and will continue efforts in 2024 to positively impact the economic and community development in Allen County.

For more information about the Port Authority, please visit www.AEDG.org or email the Executive Director, Cindy Leis at leisc@aedg.org.

President's Pitch

continued from page 1

One of the most appealing aspects for businesses in Lima is its location. With easy access to both I-75 and US 30, Lima is within a day's drive of 60% of the US population.

In addition to our highway systems, Allen County is home to an extensive rail system and the Allen County Regional Airport.

Allen County has hundreds of acres of land available for development with access to robust utilities that make our region an attractive option for business growth.

The revitalization projects, the business expansions, and the community engagement are all increasing. All of this is accomplished through a collaborative effort to make our region a great place to work, live, and play.

Our team continues to work with our partners to support our businesses for the workforce of the future. We will continue to work for the development of market rate housing and downtown development. We are fortunate to have state partners who support the success with funding for development efforts.

When considering locations for business growth, the question isn't "Why Allen County?"; it's "Why not Allen County?"

We continue to market the great things happening in Lima/Allen County. We are thankful for the past accomplishments and we look forward to the future. We believe the best is yet to come! Join us in that goal and together we can accomplish much.

AEDG Board News...

continued from page 1

In addition, we will continue to work on improving "the process" of completing our tasks within our goals. We all agree on what needs to be done to move Allen County forward. But we may have different ideas on how to get there. We cannot sit off to the side and tell others what they should or should not do. We have to be **actively involved** by either leading or participating in conversations with the various groups. This is where AEDG feels it can excel. This then, is where we need your help in being a part of our team. I am looking for you to bring your opinions, thoughts, and suggestions to us with an open mind and willingness to work together.

What do you think? I would love to hear from you. We stand ready...how about you? edpohjala@LimaMemorial.org

MakerFest Your Path. Your Future.

We are excited to share that MakerFest Your Path. Your Future was a success! Thanks, in large part, to our sponsors. To everyone involved - your support and contributions to the event was incredible! We are fortunate to have such generous sponsors and we can never thank you enough for all the support. With your help, we were able to provide 1,300 students, from 20 schools in the region an opportunity to get a glimpse at the tremendous career opportunities in the region and the educational pathway needed to find success.

The freshmen and sophomores were able to choose from 76 different interactive, hands-on activities. Our goal was to utilize demonstrations to inspire area high school students to pursue career opportunities that exist in the region.

MakerFest Your Path. Your Future. will return in 2024. It will be held at the Allen County Fairgrounds on October 10 & 11, 2024. If you would like to get involved, please reach out to Tina Mathews at the AEDG office. To see some of the highlights from this year's event, please go to makerfestevent.com.

Save the Date



October 10 & 11, 2024



AEDG Hires Franklin

We are delighted to extend a warm welcome to Rose Franklin as she joins the AEDG team in her new capacity as Economic Development Project Manager. Rose brings with her a wealth of experience in project management across diverse sectors, including construction, renewables, and non-profit organizations, making her a valuable addition to our team. Her profound commitment to her hometown, coupled with her extensive project management expertise, is instrumental in driving regional economic growth and fostering positive change.

Rose expressed her gratitude, stating, "I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the AEDG team and all our esteemed partners for entrusting me with the opportunity to contribute to the exciting initiatives on the horizon. I consider it a true blessing to be part of the transformative developments unfolding in our beautiful county."

Congratulations to Winans and Touch of Europe! Welcome to Central District!

