

2024
INVESTOR
GUIDE



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Defiance County is pulsing with creative, innovative problem-solving, and ripe with growth opportunities for industries of all kinds. At Defiance County Economic Development, we are striving to build a diverse, sustainable economy. Whether you have a business in Defiance County or you are thinking about siting a company here, please know, <u>you will</u> have the necessary resources to elevate your business.

In addition to offering many different resources, we are consistently striving to add value. Below are just a few ways we aim to do that:

- Market Defiance County to attract business investment and new jobs, emphasizing business sectors that will provide diversity in the Defiance County industrial makeup.
- Become your trusted partner in Workforce Development from assisting in recruiting techniques to locate training resources.
 - We offer at "no cost" targeted social media campaigns for members
 - We can access local & regional wage & benefit data
 - We can assist in establishing apprenticeships & internships
- Provide financial incentives for growing businesses.
- Protect the existing asset and employment base of Defiance County by continuing a systematic retention and expansion program.
- Facilitate infrastructure development throughout the county.
- And assist communities and businesses with their unique needs.

Again, we thank you and extend the offer to become fully engaged in the work we are doing. Feel free to reach out: at 419-784-4471. If you are an existing business in Defiance County, THANK YOU for being a pillar in our County. And if you are a new company, interested in expanding to a new location, Defiance County is the "Perfect Place to do Business". We encourage all business leaders to reach out today and experience the value we can add for you and your team members.

Sincerely,
Erika Willitzer
Executive Director



Erika Willitzer Executive Director





Our Team



Erika Willitzer Executive Director

Before becoming the Executive Director at Defiance County Economic Development, Erika spent over 6 years working at a utility in Economic Development. During her tenure, she was trained and worked with global companies and their business and electrical needs. She was also one of the founders of the Paulding County Vision Board. In three years of existence, the Vision Board united the county with representation from all parts of Paulding County and raised funds for quality-of-life projects, including a housing study. Willitzer has a key account certification, in working with large employers.

Previous to working for the utility, she worked as the Paulding Chamber of Commerce Executive Director where she worked with local businesses and developed a passion for rural revitalization. In total, she has over 12 years of experience working in economic and community development. Erika worked as a news anchor and personality at NewsTalk 1190 WOWO and 97.3 WMEE out of Fort Wayne, Indiana for over 10 years.

Fun Fact:

I love going to garage sales! My best find at a sale was a car for \$300 and I drove that car for over 10 years. It was a bit of a beater, but it ran like a champ! Tears were shed when we had to take it to the junkyard.



Paige Johnson
Assistant
Executive Director

Paige is a 2017 Fairview High School and Four County Career Center Graduate. She was born in Warsaw, Indiana, where she lived for around 8 years before moving to the Farmer/Ney area. Paige also graduated from Northwest State Community College with an associate's degree in Business Administration and Accounting and, more recently, the University of Toledo with a Bachelor's degree in Business Management & Marketing. Paige grew up on a farm and participated in many activities including 4-H for 11 years and FFA where she received her State FFA Degree. In 4-H Paige has shown every animal in 4-H EXCEPT for poultry. (I hate chickens)

Paige has a 6-year-old daughter, Scarlette, and resides in Archbold, Ohio. She also has almost 7 years of experience in accounting and business relations at various small to mid-size organizations. Most recently, Paige came to the Defiance County CIC from the Fulton County Economic Development Corporation, where she was employed as their Volunteer & Events Coordinator. Paige is also a member of Rotary and the Defiance County Farm Bureau. Her favorite hobbies include golf, snow skiing, surfing, and kayaking!

Fun Fact:

My favorite animal has always been sharks and my top bucket list item is to one day swim with them!



Dave Hire

Marketing & Office

Coordinator

Dave is a familiar voice (and face) in northwest Ohio. Like Erika, his original background is in broadcasting. In a nearly 40 year radio career, he was the Creative Services Director for the iHeart Media radio stations in Defiance and Napoleon (Mix 98-1, 105.7 The Bull, News Talk 1280 WONW, and Classic Hits 103.1 WNDH). He produced thousands of radio commercials not just locally, but in markets including Chicago, Philadelphia, and Phoenix. As Defiance County Economic Development's Marketing And Office Coordinator, Dave oversees our website and social media pages, and is part of creating marketing and recruiting campaigns for various local businesses, schools and organizations.

Dave enjoys music in his spare time, as a 20 year member of the Northwesternaires barbershop chorus, and as part of the worship team at his church (aided by his trusty vintage Fender Telecaster).

Fun Fact:

Dave competed in the National Spelling Bee. It was the summer Richard Nixon resigned, so unlike contestants from previous years, he didn't get to have his picture taken with the President. He did get John Erlichman's autograph, though (look it up).

Board of Directors

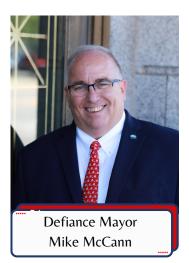
BOARD PRESIDENT



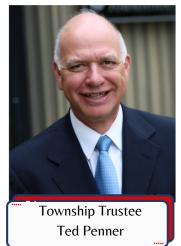
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Sarah Tackett

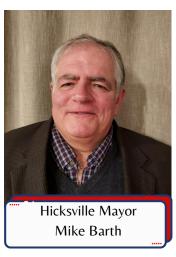


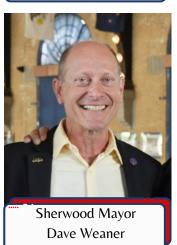




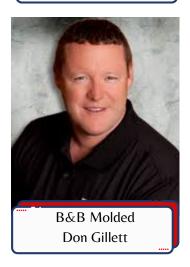




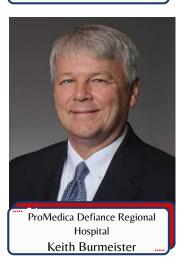














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2023 Year in Review

In 2022 the Defiance County Economic Development office recorded over \$175 million in new investment, and in 2023, our office aided with over \$230 million in new investment into our county. I can't tell you the number of people who have come up to me and said, "Wow, you have been so lucky." Or they state, the only reason you've had some

Economic development success is LUCK. I took offense to that, at first. It felt like they were implying our team just sits back and lets the good times roll. I thought to myself, "Oh if they only knew of our team's many fails or disappointing moments. Or if they only knew of the strategy and scrappiness of what we do each day!" BUT my entire perspective changed on "Luck" after one Defiance County native spouted off a movie quote.

I was speaking with Businessman Rod Rittenhouse of Defiance, when he threw down the quote, "Chance favors the prepared mind." I asked where he heard that quote. He calmly said, "it's from the Steven Seagal movie, "Under Siege 2". I cracked up laughing. 1.) Because I wasn't expecting that answer, and 2.) It was from a Steven Seagal movie! And following that conversation, I started researching "Luck". Turns out science has discovered how to be luckier. Luck is actually a question of attitude and seizing opportunities that many might miss.

British psychologist Richard Wiseman, a prominent figure in the study of luck, argues that luck isn't a matter of chance, but a product of our thoughts and behaviors. In his research, Wiseman identified four principles that lucky people seem to exhibit: they are skilled at creating and noticing chance opportunities, they make lucky decisions by listening to their intuition, they create self-fulfilling prophecies via positive expectations, and adopting a resilient attitude that transforms bad luck into good. Thus, in Wiseman's view, luck is not a mystical force, but a pattern of behaviors and mindset that can be learned and enhanced.

While some people may seem luckier than others, it's important to remember that luck is not solely determined by chance. By being prepared, networking, and adopting a positive attitude and behavior, anyone can increase their chances of attracting luck. As Wiseman suggests, perhaps it's time for us to shift our mindset from one of "luck" to one of "creating opportunities."

After all, luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. So, let's prepare and keep an open mind to welcome the fortunate moments that come our way. Chance does favor those who are prepared!

So, are we lucky here at Defiance County Economic Development? I would say, OH YEAH! Do we jump at attractive opportunities -Yes! Do we find the learning lesson or the positive in some of our losses - Yes! Do we position our County to WIN...Absolutely & Always! And do we come prepared...Every single day! So, what does luck have to do with it? Turns out, Everything.



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YOUR INVESTMENT ALLOWS US TO:

- PROTECT THE EXISTING ASSET AND EMPLOYMENT BASE OF DEFIANCE COUNTY BY CONTINUING A SYSTEMATIC RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROGRAM.
- MARKET DEFIANCE COUNTY TO ATTRACT BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND NEW JOBS, EMPHASIZING BUSINESS SECTORS THAT WILL PROVIDE DIVERSITY IN THE DEFIANCE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL MAKEUP.
- FACILITATE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.
- BECOME YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - FROM ASSISTING IN RECRUITING TECHNIQUES TO LOCATE TRAINING RESOURCES.
- PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR GROWING BUSINESS.
- ASSIST COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES WITH THEIR UNIQUE NEEDS.



CONTACT US

419-784-4471 www.defiancecountyed.com





BY ROAD

- THE CITY OF DEFIANCE IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED WITHIN A 45-MINUTE DRIVE OF BOTH TOLEDO, OHIO, AND FORT WAYNE, INDIANA. DEFIANCE COUNTY IS CENTRALLY LOCATED BETWEEN MARKETS IN CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, INDIANAPOLIS, COLUMBUS, DETROIT AND CHICAGO.
- THE CITY OF DEFIANCE FEATURES FOUR INTERCHANGES WITH U.S. ROUTE 24, THE MAJOR HIGHWAY CONNECTING FORT WAYNE AND TOLEDO. STATE ROUTES 18, 15, 66, 111 AND 281 ALSO INTERSECT IN THE CITY.
- US 127 AND STATE ROUTE 18 INTERSECT IN THE VILLAGE OF SHERWOOD AND STATE ROUTES 18, 49, AND 2 PASS THROUGH THE VILLAGE OF HICKSVILLE. THE OHIO TURNPIKE (I-80/I-90) SPANS THE STATE FROM EAST TO WEST AND IS LESS THAN TWENTY MILES FROM THE CITY OF DEFIANCE AND THE VILLAGE OF HICKSVILLE. ELEVEN TRUCK LINES PROVIDE INTRASTATE AND INTERSTATE SHIPPING.

BY AIR

- TOLEDO EXPRESS AND FORT WAYNE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS, SERVED BY SEVERAL NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES, ARE LOCATED WITHIN AN HOUR'S DRIVE FROM DEFIANCE COUNTY.
- THE DEFIANCE COUNTY MEMORIAL AIRPORT FEATURES A 4,200-FOOT PLASI LIGHTED RUNWAY WITH INSTRUMENT APPROACH AND PROVIDES FACILITIES FOR CORPORATE AND PRIVATE AIRCRAFT.

BY RAIL

 NAPOLEON, DEFIANCE & WESTERN RAILWAY, AND CSX RAILROAD SERVE DEFIANCE COUNTY'S RAIL NEEDS, WITH AN AMTRAK STATION LOCATED IN NEIGHBORING WILLIAMS COUNTY.

BY BOAT

• THE PORT OF TOLEDO, LOCATED ON LAKE ERIE, IS LESS THAN 50 MILES AWAY FROM THE CITY OF DEFIANCE.

FALL BREAKFAST



Each year, we plan to host a Fall Breakfast. This event is FREE and is open to our current local investors. This event is also open to other businesses who are interested in becoming investors of our organization. Enjoy breakfast, networking, business updates, and guest speakers!

ANNUAL BANQUET



Each year, our office hosts an annual banquet and awards ceremony. This is a paid event and is open to everyone. Enjoy a great meal, networking, business updates, awards, entertainment, and more!

MONTHLY CERTIFICATIONS



Our office is hosting FREE certification/training courses throughout the year available to the public. These trainings are in partnership with Northwest State Custom Training Solutions and other local entities.

GLOW GOLF OUTING

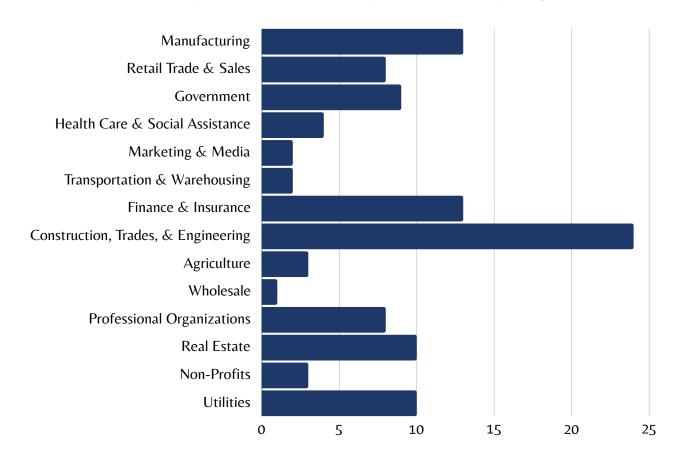


Our Glow Golf Outing was a HIT so we are doing it again! The proceeds from the golf outing will help us build our Homegrown Fund which will be used to support local businesses through small grants.



Currently, our organization is made up of around 110 Business Investors!

These businesses range in industry from Tech, Logistics, Finance, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Construction, and many others. With our diverse group of investors, we are able to help connect our community members with any resource they might need.





(ALL SERVICES LISTED BELOW ARE FREE TO INVESTORS)

- Individual Workforce Recruitment Strategy Plans
- Assist in Planning Creative Recruitment Events
- Development of School to Work Programs with Local Schools
- Youth Camps includes Manufacturing, Food, Construction, & Auto
- Promotion of Partner Education Initiatives ex. OMJ, Northwest State, Defiance College, Library etc.
- Tours Targeting: Healthcare, Food, Manufacturing, Public Service
- Second Chance Program: Individuals with barriers get a second chance at re-entering the workforce
- Networking Opportunities
 - Annual Glow Golf Outing
 - Fall Breakfast
 - Annual Meeting
- Team Engagement & Involvement
- Leadership Growth Opportunities
 - Mentorship Program
 - Monthly Certifications
- Individualized Goal Setting for Business Growth
- Financial Incentives for Growing Businesses
- Tax Credit Information
- Become an Addition to Our Community Resource List
- Facilitation of Infrastructure Needs
- Business Development/Creation Help and Advice



Paige Johnson

Assistant Executive Director







Mentorship Program

The Defiance County Economic Development Mentorship Program is in partnership with United Way of Defiance County and was created to help local businesses and workers upscale their skills and help them reach their professional goals.

This program is a year-long commitment and is open to EVERYONE!

We want to: KEEP PEOPLE INTERESTED KEEP PEOPLE INVOLVED KEEP PEOPLE INVESTED

Our mentorship program is designed to help employers and individuals who are looking to improve on or learn new skills that will help them progress in their careers. Our goal is to improve the quality of our county's workforce by helping to:

- Retain top-performing employees.
- Improve leadership skills.
- Create an inclusive and diverse culture.
- Improve managerial and new employee competency.
- Upskill and transfer the key institution knowledge of our current workforce to the next generation of workers entering the workforce.

For more information about the mentorship program, or to sign up to become a mentor or mentee, please check out our website!

www.DefianceCountyED.com/mentorshipprogram



- Sponsorship Opportunities
 - Annual Glow Golf Outing
 - Monthly Certification Courses
 - Fall Breakfast
- Business Podcasts & Short Videos (Taste the Local Cuisine)
- Q & A's Podcasts with Local High Profiled Individuals
- Testimonies about Defiance County, Ohio
- Intriguing Feature Stories- Social Media
- Weekly Q&A Social Media Giveaways!
- Working it Podcast with Local Businesses
- Free Job Postings on Social Media and Website
- Feature Blog Stories of Local Businesses and Updates
- E-Newsletter Advertising and Access





Marketing & Office Coordinator



Marketing Statistics

LET'S TALK NUMBERS...

TOTAL REACH ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS= 322,553

In 2023 our Facebook posts reached 283,975 people with 32,619 engagements!



Facebook:

Followers = 3,284 Reach = 283,975



LinkedIn:

Followers = 642Reach = 12,981

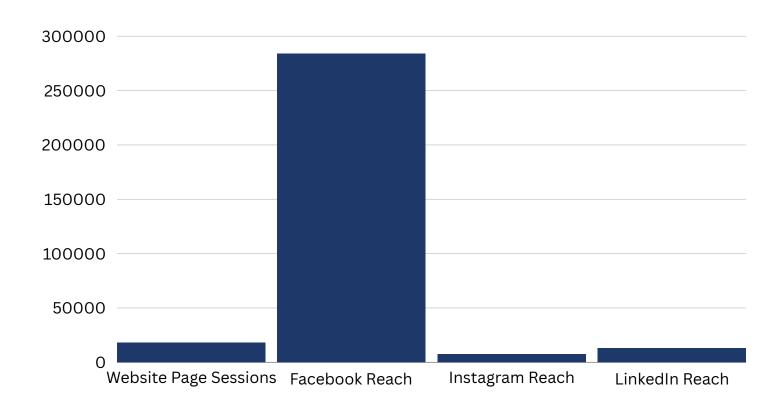


Instagram:

Followers = 239

Reach = 7,621





Incentive Programs



Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Redirects real property tax to local government to finance public infrastructure. Defiance County offers up to 75% exemption of real property taxes for up to 10 years; however, the rate and term of TIFs can be extended up to 100% for up to 30 years with approval.

Job Creation Incentive Programs (JCIP)

A local business cash incentive which redirects a portion of local income tax back to companies that create jobs inside the city or village's corporation limits. The amount of the grant returned to the company through JCIP is based on the number of jobs created and the aggregate new annual payroll developed by the firm. The City of Defiance, Village of Sherwood, and Village of Hicksville each have their own JCIP.

Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs)

The CRA program provides tax exemptions for new construction and remodeling projects in commercial, industrial, and residential areas. Four locations in Defiance have been designated as CRAs with tax exemptions ranging from 5 to 15 years.

Enterprise Zone Agreements

An Enterprise Zone Agreement offers special tax incentives to businesses that invest in capital improvements and create or retain jobs. Defiance County offers up to 100% abatement for 10 years on projects, as measured by their investment and employment numbers. Each contract must be approved by the affected School Districts, Township Trustees, Villages and/or the City of Defiance, and the Defiance Board of Commissioners.

CIC Business Development Loan Fund (BDLF)

The Business Development Loan Fund is controlled by the Community Improvement Corporation. It provides capital in the form of direct loans to businesses looking to create or expand operations within the City of Defiance. The BDLF is not a primary lending source and requires a partnership with other lenders and equity owners to qualify for consideration. Creation or retention of jobs is a program objective.

Defiance County Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund Program

This program offers low cost loans to assist with needed public infrastructure. It is available for industrial or distribution projects. Public entities are the preferred applicants.

Energy Special Improvement District (ESID)

This program provides owners (private or public) the ability to finance energy efficient enhancements to their property. An eligible project is funded through Property- Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing. 100% funded upfront with fixed rates.

Featured Sites...



CSX Site Across From GM

Defiance, OH

- Site is located directly across from GM with great access to U.S. 24.
- · Location: St. Rt. 281
- 71 acres
- CSX Main Line
- · Ample Utilities
- Great site located in the heart of Northwest Ohio



Sherwood Industrial Park

Sherwood, OH

- This shovel-ready industrial park has infrastructure in place in Sherwood,
 Ohio. 40 acres available for development.
- Location: Decker Drive, Sherwood, Ohio
- · Sale Price: \$30,000 per acre
- · Village of Sherwood water and sewer
- Fiber available



Harmon Business Park

Defiance, OH

- Strategically located off U.S. Route 24, with proposed 3-5 acre lots which can be combined for larger parcels. 12 and 28 acre parcels also available.
- Location: East Commerce Drive in Defiance, Ohio
- Price Negotiable- Will Build to Suit
- Site Size: 55 acres in park, up to 95 acres <u>DOWNLOAD Brochure</u>



Hicksville Industrial Park

Hicksville, OH

- This shovel-ready industrial park has easy access to Fort Wayne, Chicago and Cleveland.
- Location: Industrial Drive, Hicksville, Ohio
- Sale Price: \$35,000 per acre
- · Site Size: 165 acres

Featured Sites...



US 24/Stadium/Carpenter Land

Defiance, OH

- · Property Highlights
- Opportunity Zone Interstate Development Parcel
- 176.4 acre parcel with US 24 interstate visibility
- Regional Hub between Toledo and Fort Wayne
- Mixed Use- Apartments, Senior, Medical, Retail, Industrial Needs
- · Call for pricing
- Zoned: B-3/M-1



Fox Run Executive Park

Defiance, OH

- Multiple Lots
- · All Utilities at Site
- Build to Suit
- \$75,000 per acre
- Zoned M2



11580 Krouse Road Site

Defiance, OH

 Adjacent to U.S. Route 24. Located in the City of Defiance. Site is zoned M-3 (heavy industrial). Water supply up to 4 million gallons per day. Sewer treatment capacity up to 3.5 million gallons per day. Large natural gas supply available from gas transmission lines adjacent to site. Aggressive local incentives. 15 acre pond on site available for raw water supply or retention pond.



Liska South Property

Defiance, OH

- · Property Highlights
- 27.6 acre site
- · US 24 interstate visibility
- Utilities on site
- \$35,000/acre

HomeGrown Grant Program Growing Business From Within!

Program Overview:

Our board is looking for passion, as well as business smarts. You are eligible if you are a small business based in Defiance County, Ohio and has a revenue no larger than \$250,000 annually. We have \$10,000 budgeted annually, but once those funds are allocated our next round will begin the following calendar year. Award amounts are \$500. Awards will be allocated quarterly after review of the Homegrown Board.

Allocations rounds will happen accordingly:

*March 1, 2024

*June 1, 2024

*September 1, 2024

*December 1, 2024



REQUIREMENTS:

- Applicant is required to fill our online application.
- Must provide your most recent Balance Sheet & Profit & Loss Financial Documents.
- Applicants must have their business registered with the State of Ohio, to be eligible.
- Once awarded, if the business owner hasn't met with Northwest State's Small Business
 Development Center, this will be a requirement, with the goal of developing a business plan or
 growth plan. This is a service with no cost and great benefits to make sure you are prepared to
 start your business or scale up your existing business. Feel free to reach out ahead of applying
 to Lisa Becher Nwohiosbdc@gmail.com
- Awardees will be required to provide receipts or invoices for the funds allocated.
- This award can only be applied for once per year.

TO APPLY:

Visit https://www.defiancecountyed.com/homegrown

THIS PROGRAM IS SPONSORED BY:





SHOW OUR VETERANS SOME SUPPORT









We're on a mission to raise funds to create a new landmark in Defiance County, Ohio. Our goal is to erect four 120 foot tall poles with 30x60 foot American Flags off of U.S. 24. The current cost of the project is \$200,000. The locations of the four flags will be located at (4) companies along US-24: Keller Logistics, Premier Bank, Werlor, and ProMedica.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

DEFIANCE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1300 E. SECOND STREET SUITE 201

DEFIANCE OH 43512

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CALL 419-784-4471

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT

Become an Investor

YES! I'D LOVE TO INVEST IN DEFIANCE COUNTY!

I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION.	
NOT AT THIS TIME, BUT KEEP ME IN MINE	O FOR THE FUTURE.
	E) /E1 C
INVESTOR I	LEVELS
DIAMOND \$10,000+ 500 - 1000 + Employees	PLATINUM \$5,000+ 50 to 100 + Employees
GOLD \$1,000+ 100 to 500 + Employees	SILVER \$500+ NonProfits, Start-Ups, Smaller Compan
INVESTOR INFO	ORMATION
Please mail form: 1300 E. Second St. Suite 201, Defiance, OH	43512 or email: Paige@DefianceCountyED.com
We choose to invest \$	_ annually to support
Defiance County Economic	c Development.
Name:	
Title:	
Organization:	
Address:	
City: State: Zip:	
Phone: Email:	



INVESTOR LEVELS



DIAMOND \$10,000 500 - 1000 + Employees

- Candidate for seat on Board
- Voting membership
- Investor directory listing
- Home page website recognition
- Committee involvement
- Monthly E-newsletters
- Enhanced recognition on all ED Marketing Materials
- Unlimited E-New Ads (Can include your own content)



PLATINUM \$5,000 + 100 to 500 + Employees

- Candidate for seat on Board
- Voting membership
- Investor directory listing
- · Home page website recognition
- Committee involvement
- Monthly E-newsletters
- Enhanced recognition on all ED Marketing Materials
- (5) E-News Ads



GOLD \$1000+ 50 to 100 + Employees

- Voting Membership
- · Investor directory listing
- Monthly E-Newsletter
- Committee involvement
- (3) E-Newsletter Ads



SILVER \$500 + NonProfits, Start-Ups, Smaller Companies

- Voting membership
- · Investor directory listing
- Monthly E-Newsletter
- Committee involvement



Name	Position	Email
Erika Willitzer	Executive Director	Erika@DefianceCountyED.com
Paige Johnson	Assistant Executive Director	Paige@DefianceCountyED.com
Dave Hire	Marketing & Office Coordinator	Dave@DefianceCountyED.com

Office Contact



419-784-4471



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www.DefianceCountyED.com

