



E·C·G·R·A
ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT
FOR
OCTOBER
2019**



Ridge Policy Group Activity

ECGRA September 15 – October 15 Report

Major Updates

As you know, ARC granted the City of Erie, PA, \$500,000 for the Broadband Deployment program. Grant funds will expand the Erie Innovation District's Secure Smart City pilot initiative by providing free public Wi-Fi access to Erie's eight federally designated Opportunity Zones. This project is part of a larger effort by the city to recruit, retain, and expand business investments and jobs in the Opportunity Zones. The project will leverage the expertise of a private sector digital technology solutions provider for smart cities. The initiative will provide outdoor Wi-Fi access; urban security solutions, including license plate recognition and traffic monitoring; analytics that can be tracked on a visualization dashboard; and the ability to remotely control street lights.

Ridge Policy Group helped Karl Sanchack from Erie Innovation District significantly with this application process, beginning last year. All activity includes but is not limited to:

- Mark Holman, Zaida Ricker, and Britte Earp meeting with Karen Fabiano at Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) regarding ARC POWER Projects in February 2018
- Britte Earp discussion with Jill Foys at Northwest Commission about ARC POWER projects in February 2018
- Britte Earp significantly reviewing/ helping to draft the first round of the ARC POWER Grant
- Britte Earp several rounds of conversations with Karl and ARC POWER folks to help with final submission
- Continued conversations this year to help Karl complete the application

Other RPG Relevant Activity

- The PA Senate was accepting authorizations for capital budget projects. Mark Campbell spoke with ECGRA folks and helped to submit for the North East Borough.
- Scheduled and started a regular call with Perry and folks from North East Borough (every two weeks).
- Spoke with Senator Laughlin about Erie priorities at informal event
- Sent relevant updates about what is happening in Congress.



| Funding Opportunities | Awards |
|---|--------------|
| Erie School District/Mercyhurst University – PAsmart Award | \$ 500,000 |
| Greater Erie Community Action Committee – pre-apprenticeship program | \$ 49,995 |
| ARC Grant – Investing in Appalachia’s Future: ARC 5-year Strategic Plan | \$ 200,000 |
| EDA – Regional Innovation Strategies Assistance to Coal Communities Program | \$ 1,000,000 |
| Millcreek School District Foundation – tax credit | \$ 20,000 |
| City of Erie/Erie Innovation District (ARC POWER grant) | \$ 500,000 |
| Erie Innovation District (EDA grant) | \$ 2,000,000 |
| TOTAL: | \$ 4,269,995 |



**ECGRA invests in Community Assets
AGENDA**

George Deutch

Welcome

Perry Wood

Intro to Community Assets | ECGRA

Senator Dan Laughlin

**Remarks on ECGRA's Strategic
Investment of Local Share Gaming
Revenue**

Carl Anderson

**Remarks on Investing in Community
Assets**

Mary Jane Koenig

**Remarks on Value of Investing in
Historical Assets**

Lorraine Dolan

**Remarks on ECGRA funding Impact
on Women's Suffrage Exhibit**

CHECK PRESENTATIONS



ECGRA Invests in the Community Assets; Enhances Quality Programs throughout the Region

More than \$146,000 in Grants Awarded

CONTACT: Kate Philips
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ERIE, PA (September 30, 2019) Set against an historic backdrop at the Watson-Curtze Mansion, the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) announced more than \$146,000 in their 2019 Community Assets Grant Program today, which will be distributed to 15 arts, culture, and heritage organizations across Erie County.

“Arts, culture, and heritage organizations are a smart investment of ECRGA dollars because they enrich the quality of life for all residents,” said Pennsylvania State Senator Dan Laughlin (PA-49). “Each of these grantees is creating an experience that make Erie County a great place to visit and call home.”

ECGRA has invested \$2.038 million in the Community Asset Grant Program, supporting capital improvements and programming which provide social, educational, cultural, health, recreation, and/or economic benefits to residents of Erie County.

“Today’s grants are part of a broader strategic investment model that seeks to improve Erie County’s economic and community outlook,” said Carl Anderson, Erie County Council (District 4). “ECGRA is an integral part of the County’s efforts to improve our economy, our neighborhoods and our quality of life in Erie County. Celebrating history gives us pride to strengthen our efforts to better our community and insure its future.”

“ECGRA’s investment in arts, culture, and heritage encourages entrepreneurs and innovation, enables communities to engage in creative placemaking, plays an integral role in attracting new

residents and businesses by elevating the quality of life, and protects what is unique to Erie County,” said Perry Wood, Executive Director, ECGRA.

The Erie County Chapter of the League of Women Voters was a recipient of this round of grants. For almost 100 years, the League has helped women and men become informed participants in government.

“2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women’s constitutional right to vote,” said Lorraine Morse-Dolan, Erie County League of Women Voters. “This Community Asset grant will allow us to continue to tell the story of Erie’s suffrage movement as well as increase voter registration, outreach, education, and voter turnout through knowledge, history, and art.”

The Erie County World War I Centennial Project Chairperson also spoke at today’s event, thanking ECGRA for its investment in its World War I Centennial Commemoration project.

“Thanks to this funding, we will continue to create public programming that serves to educate Erie county citizens about the causes, course, and consequences of World War I, while honoring the heroism and sacrifice of those Erie County men and women who served during the War,” said Mary Jane Koenig, Chairperson, Erie County World War Centennial Committee. “Commemorating the centennial of this global event enhances our local experience and honors our history.”

A maximum of \$15,000 per application; overall \$200,000 per grant cycle. Below is a breakdown of the Community Asset Grants that were announced at today’s event:

| Organization | Project | Amount Awarded |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| AmeriMasala | AmeriMasala Movement | \$8,000.00 |
| Community Access Media | CAM Content Delivery Server Replacement | \$7,000.00 |
| Edinboro Arts & Music Fest | Downtown Edinboro Art & Music Festival | \$10,000.00 |
| Edinboro Highland Games | Edinboro Highland Games & Scottish Festival | \$8,000.00 |
| Erie Yesterday | Heritage Organizations Collaborative Application | \$12,250.00 |
| Film Society of Northwestern PA | Greater Erie Film Office Web Resources Expansion | \$15,000.00 |
| Goodell Gardens & Homestead | Goodell Gardens Tractor Purchase | \$10,000.00 |
| Greater Erie Alliance for Equality | LGBTQ Educational Programming | \$7,000.00 |
| Impact Corry | Corry RAILS Committee Project "A" - Purchase and Restoration of Climax A-313 | \$10,000.00 |

| | | |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Lake Erie Fanfare | 37th Season of Drum Corps Activities in the Erie Area | \$10,000.00 |
| League of Women Voters Erie County Chapter | "Votes for Women", the 19th Amendment 100th Anniversary | \$15,000.00 |
| North East Community Fair Association | New Laptops & Fair Program Updates | \$3,150.00 |
| Presque Isle Chapter, NSDAR | Erie County World War I Centennial Project | \$15,000.00 |
| WQLN Public Media | Our Town 2019-2020: Stories from Fairview and McKean | \$6,000.00 |
| Young Artists Debut Orchestra | YADO's 15th Season | \$10,000.00 |
| TOTAL | | \$146,400.00 |

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**ECGRA invests in Waterford
AGENDA**

Perry Wood
ECGRA, Exec. Director

ECGRA Invests in Waterford/Emcee

Scott Rastatter
Erie County Council

Remarks on ECGRA Investments in
Waterford

Gary Lee
County of Erie

Remarks on ECGRA investing in
County

Tim LaFlamme
Waterford Borough Council President

Remarks on Waterford investments

Michael Paris
ECGRA, Board Chair

Check Presentations

CHECK PRESENTATIONS

Waterford, Borough Council President

Impact Corry, TBD

Borough of Girard, TBD

Preservation Erie, Melinda Meyer



ECGRA Mission Main Street Investments Supporting Economic Revitalization, Building Local Capacity

Preservation Erie Continues Work to Support Local Communities through Mission Main Street

CONTACT: Kate Philips
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WATERFORD, PA (October 8, 2019) The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) announced more than \$770,000 to support revitalization projects throughout the County as part of their 2019 Mission Main Street Grant Program at the Judson House in Waterford, PA.

During the event, ECGRA presented \$250K to Preservation Erie to continue its work across Erie County, helping localities plan for and implement Main Street projects. Preservation Erie has successfully helped guide Waterford and Girard Boroughs through a capacity building phase—both have now successfully developed the internal capacity to independently secure this funding and continue their Main Street revitalization projects.

“Local share gaming revenue is making a transformational impact through reinvestment in Erie County’s Main Streets and helping fuel local revitalization efforts through capacity building and matching funds,” County Council Member Scott Rastatter said. “This work is creating a strategic impact beyond check presentations.”

Rastatter was joined by County Councilperson Andre Horton, Erie County Director of Administration, Gary Lee, Waterford Borough Council President Tim LaFlamme, Melinda Meyer of Preservation Erie and ECGRA officials to celebrate the ongoing reinvestment in the region.

“ECGRA’s Mission Main Street Grants are supporting the heartbeat of communities across Erie County,” said Gary Lee, Director of Administration, County of Erie. “As our main streets are reinvigorated, so are our neighborhoods and our local economies. The collaboration with Preservation Erie proves that working to build a good plan, building capacity, and smart investments work.”

“Studies show that improving main streets can drive job creation and promote tourism – two critical economic growth components,” said Perry Wood, Executive Director, ECGRA. “Mission Main Street funding is also sparking collaboration and building local capacity through an effort by

Preservation Erie to help small and rural communities prepare to access these funds. Waterford and Girard would not have been prepared to implement Mission Main Street projects without the guidance and assistance of Preservation Erie—this work will live on beyond today.”

Preservation Erie was a recipient of this round of grants. Founded in 2007, the organization’s mission is to promote, preserve, and enhance the distinctive character of greater Erie through community-based planning, design, and historic preservation. Currently, Preservation Erie is working with Lawrence Park and Union City, where Mission Main Street efforts are in their infancy.

“The built landscape is a tangible expression of our richly layered history,” said Melinda Meyer of Preservation Erie. “Through a series of initiatives and educational and re-grant programs, Preservation Erie is striving to nurture the connectedness of residents to Erie County’s historic places and build a culture of preservation.”

As towns and communities across the region reinvest in local businesses, infrastructure, and neighborhoods, this new round of investments by ECGRA includes a nearly \$250,000 Mission Main Street grant to the Waterford Borough to help preserve the architectural heritage of downtown Waterford.

“The Waterford Borough is excited to begin improvements as well as provide our own neighborhood grants with this funding,” said Tim LaFlamme, Waterford Borough Council President. “These projects will encourage private investment and long-term commitments to the community.”

The Borough of Girard (\$170,000) and Impact Corry (\$202,400) were also awarded Mission Main Street grants.

The Borough of Girard intends to develop a downtown master plan, continue a facade grant program, and develop and implement a marketing strategy for the downtown. Impact Corry will be focusing their revitalizing efforts of the arts to turn an underperforming and underdrawing portion of a city into a sought-after destination.

Mission Main Street grants that were announced today:

| Organization | Project | Amount Received |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| Borough of Girard | Revitalizing Downtown Girard | \$170,000.00 |
| Impact Corry | Building a Real and Virtual Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Business District Destination | \$202,400.00 |
| Preservation Erie | Building a Culture of Preservation | \$150,000.00 |
| Waterford Borough | Downtown Improvements | \$249,800.00 |
| TOTAL | | \$772,200.00 |

Using national best practices as models for grant making and impact investing since 2008, ECGRA has made and reported on 1,075 grants and loans to 248 nonprofits and municipalities totaling over \$58 million of investments of local share gaming revenue.

ECGRA has set aside \$2.5 million in grants over the next three years for Main Street revitalization. Mission Main Street grantees are required to match ECGRA's \$1.2 million of local share gaming revenue investments, extending the reach of these valuable economic development dollars to \$2.4 million revitalizing main streets across Erie County in the past six years.

ABOUT MISSION MAIN STREET

ECGRA's Mission Main Street Grants is one of three *IMPACT: Neighborhoods & Communities* initiatives invested in and measured by the ECGRA board of directors with the purpose of reinvigorating neighborhoods and main corridors, boosting buy-local efforts, and combating blight.

Mission Main Street Grants were established in 2013 by the ECGRA board of directors to buttress any area recognized as a "main street" — a distinct geographic area host to small businesses, special events, historic structures, green spaces, and parks.

Mission Main Street grant guidelines, available at www.ECGRA.org, were originally written in collaboration with a volunteer committee made up of 19 municipal, nonprofit, and business leaders from across the county.

Applicants can apply for up to \$250,000 over three years for an implementation project, and up to \$10,000 for a one-year planning project. All projects require a 1:1 cash match.

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Renaissance Block Program Meeting/Listening Session

Special guest: Mary Maxwell, Program Manager, Jamestown Renaissance Block

October 9, 2019

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Program overview
- Prior grantee experience
- Suggestions for improvement
- Mary Maxwell and the Jamestown Experience
- 2020 grant process and schedule



Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 10, 2019
11:30am – 1:00pm
5240 Knowledge Parkway, Erie, PA 16510

AGENDA

- I. Creating an Iconic Connection between the Bayfront and Downtown (Jefferson Educational Society)

- II. Wayne School Reimagined (Erie Center for Arts & Technology)
 - ~ Daria Devlin
 - ~ 11:35 a.m.

- III. North East Revitalization Fund (Sustain North East)
 - ~ Patrick Gehrlein and Charlene Kerr
 - ~ 12:10 p.m.

| Asset Class | Description |
|-------------------------|---|
| Cash | Linked Deposits with local banks, credit unions & CDFIs to accomplish small business financing goals |
| Fixed Income | Senior and subordinate debt in revolving loans funds, CDFIs, SBA-backed loans, affordable housing projects, social impact bonds targeted to Erie County |
| Alternative Investments | Growth, venture and working capital for industry and business |
| Community Facilities | Nonprofit owned and operated publicly accessible facilities that create an economic impact |

in paper for Girard, Lake City, Fairview, ...



Photo by Alex Topor

Members of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and officials from Edinboro gather at Goodell Gardens on Wednesday, Sept. 11, for ECGRA to present a \$250,000 check to the Borough of Edinboro as part of a Mission Main Street grant.

ECGRA announces \$250K investment into Edinboro

By Alex Topor
Editor, Edinboro/McKean

EDINBORO – The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority announced on Wednesday, Sept. 11, during a press conference at Goodell Gardens & Homestead that it's investing \$250,000 into downtown Edinboro through a grant project.

The grant project, Mission Main Street, will support the borough in its efforts to revitalize downtown Edinboro. This isn't the first time the grant project has been introduced into Edinboro.

Last year, Edinboro received a \$15,000 Mission Main Street grant from ECGRA. Through a small investment

from the Borough of Edinboro and local business owners, about \$65,000 was used to improve downtown businesses.

"We tweaked our main street grants in a significant way. We went from a \$15,000 and a one-year commitment to a \$250,000 grant and a three year-commitment," Perry Wood, ECGRA executive director, said. "We did this because of the aggressiveness of groups like the ones here today."

This grant will provide direct assistance to the business community through façade improvements, transformation of lighting and sidewalks, new banners for Erie and Meadville streets and training for part-

ners to leverage social media platforms to advance business and community goals.

"These projects are part of an overall strategy to improve the business environment and enhance the community offerings that make towns like Edinboro desirable places to live, work and play," Wood said. "ECGRA dollars are empowering this well-organized group of leaders to make a lasting impact on the long term viability of one of Erie County's unique and historic towns."

Applicants to the Mission Main Street grant can apply for up to \$250,000 over three years for an implementation

See Edinboro P.2



Photo by Alex Topor

From left, Perry Wood, executive director of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority; and Kevin Oppe, Edinboro Borough manager, speak at a press conference on Wednesday, Sept. 11, at Goodell Gardens & Homestead.

Edinboro

Continued from Page 1

project and up to \$10,000 for a one-year planning project. All projects require a 1:1 cash match.

"When I came into my position two years ago, I found a lot of business owners who had energy, ideas, a vision of what they wanted to do and a lot of community members with vision. They just didn't have a way to bring it all together," Borough Manager Kevin Oppe said. "There are a lot of important and wonderful things happening downtown and a lot of it has to do with ECGRA. They have primed the pump and really gotten the community excited."

Some members of the community were excited enough to form the Edinboro Community Economic Development organization, which recently formally received 501(c)(3) designation as a non-profit. The first chairperson of the organization, Brenda Cannel, was at the press conference as well.

"We have so many passionate people on our committee. They have a passion and a love for this area," Cannel said. "I'm thrilled to have the coop-

eration with ECGRA, the university, the borough and the wonderful citizens of Edinboro. This is a great place to be and ECGRA is helping make it even better."

ECGRA also awarded Special Events grants to the Edinboro University Foundation and the Edinboro Highland Games in the amounts of \$7,668 and \$2,124, respectively. Since 2011, ECGRA has invested \$693,971.07 into the Edinboro community.

Erie County Councilman Scott Rastatter was also at the conference to speak for the Edinboro community.

"It's so great to see so many people here today that are all working towards making our community a better place. It's always good to see government working with people to help beautify things and create a better psyche for citizens," Rastatter said. "Local share gaming revenue is making a transformational impact through reinvestment in Erie County's main streets and helping fuel economic activity by supporting successful arts and cultural experiences like the Edinboro Highland Games."

ECGRA announces Community Assets Grants

By Times-News staff

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority announced Monday it will distribute more than \$146,000 in grants to 15 arts, culture and heritage organizations in the county.

The grants, paid with gaming funds, are part of ECGRA's Community Assets Grant Program.

It supports capital improvements and programming that provide social, educational, cultural, health, recreational or economic benefits to Erie County residents.

- Recipients include:
- AmeriMasala, \$8,000
 - Community Access Media, \$7,000
 - Edinboro Arts & Music Fest, \$10,000
 - Edinboro Highland

Games, \$8,000

- Erie Yesterday, \$12,250
- Film Society of Northwestern PA, \$15,000
- Goodell Gardens & Homestead, \$10,000
- Greater Erie Alliance for Equality, \$7,000
- Impact Corry, \$10,000
- Lake Erie Fanfare, \$10,000

- Erie County Chapter of the North East Community Fair Association, \$3,150
- League of Women Voters, \$15,000
- Presque Isle Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, \$15,000
- WQLN Public Media, \$6,000
- Young Artists Debut Orchestra, \$10,000

The Corry Journal, Tuesday, October 1, 2019

Corry R.A.I.L.S. steams ahead with \$10,000 grant awarded from ECGRA

BY SARA JUKES
sara@thecorryjournal.com

Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority announced on Monday 15 organizations in Erie County that were awarded a combined \$149,000 through its 2019 Community Assets Grant Program, and Corry Railroad and Industrial Legacy Society was the recipient of \$10,000.

To date, Corry R.A.I.L.S. has raised about \$87,000, including the ECGRA grant, in its mission to attain and rebuild a Climax A 313 Steam Locomotive.

While the group's original goal

was \$70,000, Corry R.A.I.L.S. Chairman Tom VanTassel said there will always be extra costs to cover during recovery and the several years of restoration to follow.

"We're always going to need extra money because there are always surprises that come up," VanTassel said. "Once we get it back here, that's a whole different process of getting funds together to do the restoration work."

One setback that has incurred extra costs already was a cancellation of a trip to Palmer, Alaska, that was supposed to take place this summer.

Due to a hold up on paperwork, a delay on receiving signatures from all surviving descendants of the current owner of the Climax A 313 and the short summer window that Alaska has, the originally scheduled trip to retrieve the locomotive this summer was moved to the spring.

Corry R.A.I.L.S. members are, however, planning on flying to Palmer, Alaska, within the next few weeks to meet with a shipping company who will provide shipping at a reasonable cost to help the project.

"We're thinking it's going to cost around \$10,000 to get it shipped

back," VanTassel said.

There are other people to be contacted for the shipping process. The container will be shipped via railroad to Anchorage, then put on a ship from Anchorage to Seattle, and will continue from a Seattle shipping yard to Corry either on a flat bed truck or a rail car.

While in Alaska, the group will be flying up to Nome, Alaska, because R.A.I.L.S. members were contacted about parts of Climax locomotives and cars that were found in the tundra.

◀ See ECGRA, P.2

ECGRA

(Continued from front page)

"We're looking at possibly arranging to get those brought back here as well to utilize as spare parts as well as the fact that they are such a historical item," VanTassel said. "What we are looking at are the log cars, the flatbed cars and the trucks that go with them. They are all just sitting out in the tundra up there and could be restored."

Corry R.A.I.L.S. members intend to return to Alaska as early as possible in the spring to go through the last process

of packing up all the parts and pieces of the locomotive and ship it to Corry.

After the restoration is complete, the Climax A 313 will be one of only three or four of the 21 existing Climax locomotives to be brought back to a running condition.

"This little A isn't coming back to Corry just to be a thing in Corry sitting in a static display," VanTassel said. "It will be a live, steam locomotive being utilized as an ambassador around the country."

Innovation District to stand on its own

Prepares to form new board, emerge as own nonprofit

By Jim Martin
jim.martin@erietimesnews.com



Sanchack

grant from the Erie Community Foundation, the Susan Hirt Hagen Fund for Transfor- mational Philanthropy and the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority. Now it's preparing to

emerge as its own nonprofit organization. Everyone knew this moment would come.

In a November interview with the Erie Times-News, Michael T. Victor said that administrative sponsorship would most likely end within two years.

"It's our child," he said.

"But at some point, we are going to say, 'You're on your own.'"

While the Erie Innovation District has never been housed in a Mercyhurst building, it has relied on the university for a range of services, including accounting, legal, human

See INNOVATION, A4

VIEWPOINT

OUR VIEW

Innovation District to go it alone

The issue: Tech initiative maturing
Our view: Its work is just starting

For decades, Erie's default was to muddle along and make the best of situation after situation. But in recent years, especially the most recent years, there's been a collective epiphany of sorts.

Community leaders and residents alike have been coalescing around the idea that where Erie's been isn't good enough. They've bonded together in recognition of what the combination of local will and resources can accomplish if deployed with a purpose.

Among those purposes was establishing the Erie Innovation District with the intent of creating a cluster of technology businesses

in downtown Erie. As Jim Martin reported Saturday, it launched three years ago this month with the backing of Mercyhurst University and

\$4 million in seed money from the Erie Community Foundation, the Susan Hirt Hagen Fund for Transformational Philanthropy, and the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

Now the EID is preparing to stand on its own organizationally and financially. That's a testimony to the power of thinking big and following through. But for the Innovation District, it's just the beginning.

In its infancy, the EID has been supported by a variety of services provided by Mercyhurst, including accounting, administrative, marketing and legal. Now the Innovation District is in the process of weaning itself from its lifeline from Mercyhurst on the way to going it alone.

As Innovation District CEO Karl Sanchack told Martin, in recent months the EID has been working to form its own 501(c)3 and assemble a new board of directors. But make no mistake: The stand-alone Erie Innovation District will still draw on the leadership and expertise of key community partners.

The new board so far includes Sanchack; Joe NeCastro, former EID board chairman; Jim Martin, regional president of Northwest Bank; and Keith Kennedy, senior vice president of Erie Insurance. Sanchack said the goal is to expand the board to include representatives from LECOM and all of the local universities.

To fuel its work — which includes business accelerator programs to lure startup technology companies to Erie in hopes of building a growing network — the EID will now turn to other sources of funding. They include Cap-Zone Impact Investments, of Connecticut, which in August announced it was forming a \$10 million venture capital fund focused on identifying and recruiting tech startups for Erie. The EID is also seeking to add grants and other investments to the mix.

The focus on startups is being complemented by some established tech companies based elsewhere — including ValueMomentum and MCPc — to expand in downtown Erie and add to the, well, momentum.

The Erie Innovation District is of a piece with other efforts to transform Erie's economy and renew its downtown. Congratulations to all whose drive and generosity brought it to this point.



ECGRA awards more than \$770,000 in grants

By Times-News staff

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority on Tuesday announced more than \$770,000 in Mission Main Street grants, which support community revitalization.

ECGRA presented \$150,000 to Preservation Erie to continue its work across Erie County, helping localities plan for and implement Main Street projects. Preservation Erie has successfully helped guide Waterford and Girard boroughs through a capacity building phase — both have now successfully developed the internal capacity to independently secure this funding and continue their Main Street revitalization projects.

Founded in 2007, Preservation Erie's mission is to promote, preserve

and enhance the distinctive character of greater Erie through community-based planning, design and historic preservation.

Preservation Erie is currently working with Lawrence Park, Albion and Union City, where Mission Main Street efforts are in their infancy.

Mission Main Street grants also were awarded to the Borough of Girard (\$170,000), Impact Corry (\$202,400), and Waterford Borough (\$249,800).

"Local share gaming revenue is making a transformational impact through reinvestment in Erie County's Main Street and helping fuel local revitalization efforts through capacity building and matching funds," Erie County Councilman Scott Rastatter said. "This work is creating a strategic impact beyond check

presentations."

ECGRA has set aside \$2.5 million in grants over the next three years for Main Street revitalization. Mission Main Street grantees are required to match ECGRA's \$1.2 million of local share gaming revenue investments, extending the reach of these valuable economic development dollars to \$2.4 million revitalizing main streets across Erie County in the past six years.

Rastatter was joined by County Councilman Andre Horton; Gary Lee, Erie County director of administration; Waterford Borough Council President Tim LaFlamme; Melinda Meyer, of Preservation Erie; and ECGRA officials.

ECGRA officials announced the grant recipients at the Judson House in Waterford.

Impact Corry awarded \$202,400 in Mission Main Street funds

BY ERIN PASSINGER
erinpass@thecorryjournal.com

A grant to support revitalization projects was awarded to Impact Corry on Tuesday in the amount of \$202,400.

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) awarded a total of \$772,200 toward four projects throughout the county as part of its 2019 Mission Main Street Grant Program.

Specifically, Impact Corry was awarded funds to build a real and virtual entrepreneurial ecosystem and business district destination.

Impact Corry will be focusing its revitalization efforts of the arts to turn an underperforming and underdrawing portion of the city into a sought-after destination.

"Impact Corry applied for Mission Main Street funding on behalf of Corry businesses to help with facade renovations, local marketing efforts, business resource development and an online events and business destina-

tion website," said Bill Nichols, President of Impact Corry. "Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority's Mission Main Street grants have proven to reinvigorate neighborhoods and main corridors, boost buy-local efforts and combat blight throughout our county."

Previous Mission Main Street grants have provided downtown trees, benches and flower planters, while funding the railroad property park project, the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail kiosk and bike fix it station.

"Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority continues to be pivotal in funding important projects throughout our region and has been incredibly generous to the Corry community," said Sandy McClellan, Impact Corry board member. "This Mission Main Street grant is just one more example of how ECGRA has stepped up to help our community thrive and prosper."

◀ See Impact Corry, P2

Impact Corry

(Continued from front page)

Impact Corry predicts facade renovations will begin during construction season 2020, with other elements debuting after the first of the year.

"This effort would not be possible without the integrated efforts of numerous downtown businesses, commercial property owners, local advocacy programs and

individuals who have worked with Impact Corry to develop this project," said Charles Gray, community development director for Impact Corry.

ECGRA has set aside \$2.5 million in grants over the next three years for main street revitalization. Mission Main Street grantees are required to match ECGRA funds.

MOVER OF THE WEEK

Brad Gleason has been named the first director of entrepreneurial operations at Gannon University's Center for Business Ingenuity and will launch The Hatchery in the new Institute for Health and Cyber Knowledge, or I-HACK.



In this newly created position, Gleason will facilitate and coordinate Gannon's business development initiatives. The new position will lead operations and guide companies to resources in the Beehive Network, to mentoring and incubation opportunities in the Erie Technology Incubator and to expanding academic-industry collaborations for new business and product development in The Hatchery.

Gleason, who starts in November, most recently was the director of operations at Mercyhurst University's Ridge College of Intelligence Studies and Applied Sciences. He earned a bachelor's degree from Gannon and a master's degree from Mercyhurst.

Erie lands \$500,000 grant to help fund free Wi-Fi

By Jim Martin
jim.martin@timesnews.com

Erie might just have moved a step closer to smart city status with a \$500,000 state grant to fund free public Wi-Fi access. The announcement came Thursday from state Reps. Ryan Bizzarro, Pat Harkins and Bob Merski.

According to the three Democratic lawmakers, the grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission will expand Erie's Secure Smart City Pilot — a project launched last year to help the city use electronic data collection to better manage resources, fight crime and improve efficiency.

"I'm especially excited about how this program is going to make us a safer community," Harkins said. "I have been working with law enforcement for some time on this project, and this infusion of funding is going to enhance security in areas that are prone to crime."

"The theory behind

smart cities is that they use information technology to capture data that can pinpoint exactly where resources are needed," Merski said.

Bizzarro said that by enabling the city to provide outdoor Wi-Fi access, the funding will lead to enhanced quality of life for residents.

In August, Erie City Council approved a professional services agreement with Quantela Inc. — a global data analytics company that is working with the city and the Erie Innovation District on technology-based projects — as part of a plan that would bring Wi-Fi to public spaces throughout the eight federal Opportunity Zone tracts in Erie.

The intention is to make those low-income areas more attractive for investment. As part of the agreement, the city would pay Digital Alpha Advisors LLC, Quantela's investment partner, \$30,000 a year for a 10-year period.

In turn, Digital Alpha Advisors said it would make an initial investment of \$506,000 to fund the initial rollout of the project. At the time, Renee Lamin, Mayor Joe Schember's chief of staff, said the city would look to leverage the \$506,000 investment from Digital Alpha Advisors to seek additional funding to support the project.

The grant is part of a package of \$8 million in funding for 10 projects in counties affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production. Although not a coal-producing region, Erie has lost jobs at the former GE Transportation plant, now owned by Wabtec, due to cuts in coal mining.

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VIEWPOINT

OUR VIEW

New Erie being seen by nation

The issue: New Erie gaining traction
Our view: Would-be leaders take note

And there it was. Just eight words past the "Erie, Pa." dateline in a recent New York Times article came, like clockwork, the cliched stock description: "this faded manufacturing hub."

The story went on to explore the mind-set of swing voters here amid the House impeachment inquiry. Only late in the text came a passing nod to the fact that Erie is "moving past the stereotype of Rust Belt decrepitude." Um, thank you?

The unflattering national media spotlight caused consternation here following Donald Trump's 2016 win. The president turned Erie County red the first time since Ronald Reagan by attracting many former Obama voters and edging out Hillary Clinton by a few thousand votes. Media coverage centered rightly on the region's economic pain, because Trump's promises to heal it won him the day.

But they failed to acknowledge other nascent currents. Lenses focused ravenously on crumbling brick and busted windows, not the shining, reclaimed bayfront. They featured despairing displaced workers, not young people staking futures here because they saw opportunity and rich quality of life.

That is changing because the Rust Belt cliches just don't fit. The same day the New York Times piece was published, The Wall Street Journal explored two of the most important efforts underway to forge Erie's future: the Erie Downtown Development Corp.'s bold endeavor, led by Erie Insurance, to sink capital in an ailing downtown real estate market to jump-start a recovery, and also the Erie Innovation District.

No question, Erie still grapples with abysmal poverty rates and it bleeds people. But there are unprecedented cross-sector strategies being advanced to engineer local solutions to heal the economy, blight and, under Mayor Joe Schember, racism.

Urban expert Bruce Katz, The Atlantic's James Fallows and others have been telling this Erie story, as have we through our Erie Next initiative.

It is welcome to see this Erie profile starting to emerge in national media coverage. More important is how clearly those vying for Erie votes in the pivotal elections ahead see this region, its grit, prospects and needs — which are resources and policies to power advanced manufacturing, education, equity and workforce development, blight remediation, infrastructure and an economy built on innovation and cybersecurity.

Erie, a swing county in a swing state, holds leverage it should wield with as much savvy as it does every other native asset these days.

Nativist appeals should mean little in a city that has always relied on immigrants to create new vitality. Likewise, as state Rep. Ryan Bizarro said, on the left, social platforms must be balanced with attention to pocketbook issues.

Both parties must know Erie is not looking backward toward a bygone, and yes, faded era. It has better things to do.

October 11, 2019

West County News-Journal

ECGRA announces \$28K investment into Edinboro

By Alex Topor
Editor, Edinboro/McKean

EDINBORO — The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority recently announced a \$28,000 investment into Edinboro with its Community Assets Grant Program.

The grant program supports capital improvements and programming that provide social, educational, cultural, health, recreational or economic benefits to Erie County residents.

One local recipient was Goodell Gardens & Homestead, which received \$10,000.

"We are so grateful to ECGRA for awarding Goodell Gardens & Homestead a \$10,000 Community Assets Grant. These monies will be used to help underwrite the purchase of a new tractor, allowing us to replace our 30-plus-year-old tractor with something more reliable, appropriately-sized and equipped for our needs," said

Amber Wellington, executive director of Goodell Gardens & Homestead. "Further, having a tractor that is reliable will allow our staff to become more efficient. Our existing tractor, who we've named Gertrude, has been plagued with a litany of mechanical and electrical issues over the past few seasons."

Since 2013, ECGRA has awarded a total of \$33,934.56 to Goodell Gardens & Homestead.

See Edinboro P.10

Edinboro

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"ECGRA is always willing to help with whatever project we approach them with. From replacing the roof of our 1885 Bank Barn to purchasing new computer and events equipment to sponsoring our full season of special events, Goodell Gardens can truly say ECGRA works," Wellington said. "I'd like to personally thank ECGRA's staff and board of directors for making all of these wonderful things in Erie County possible."

Also receiving money was the Downtown Edinboro Arts & Music Fest. The annual festival takes place at Goodell Gardens every May and features live music, vendors, art shows and other events over several days.

The festival was awarded \$10,000. Since 2011, ECGRA has awarded \$79,780.83 to the nonprofit, including the community assets grant seven times.

Also receiving grant money from ECGRA was the Edinboro Highland Games in the amount of \$8,000. The Highland Games, also an annual event, takes place every Sep-

tember at Edinboro University. It began in 1993 as a way to celebrate Scottish heritage and now features several thousand guests every year.

The \$28,000 investment into Edinboro was part of a larger \$146,000 investment into 15 total nonprofits throughout Erie County. Other recipients included the following:

- AmeriMasala — \$8,000
- Community Access Media — \$7,000
- Erie Yesterday — \$12,250
- Film Society of Northwestern PA — \$15,000
- Greater Erie Alliance for Equality — \$7,000
- Impact Corry — \$10,000
- Lake Erie Fanfare — \$10,000
- Erie County Chapter of the North East Community Fair Association — \$3,150
- League of Women Voters — \$15,000
- Presque Isle Chapter Society Daughters of the American Revolution — \$15,000
- WQLN Public Media — \$6,000
- Young Artists Debut Orchestra — \$10,000

Community college 'action plan' gets funding

Foundations to give \$300,000 grant

By Matthew Rink
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Mike Batchelor, president of the Erie Community Foundation, imagines what might have been.

What if, Batchelor wonders, Erie County had established a community college years ago.

"Just think for a second how our community would be different if we had established a community college in 2007, or better yet in the 1960s when many Pa. community colleges were established," Batchelor asked the two dozen people who gathered at the Susan B. Hirt Hagen Foundation for Transformational Philanthropy Tuesday. "Literally thousands of Erie County residents would have received technical training so desperately needed by local manufacturers and other businesses. "Educational attainment is one of the highest predictors of lifetime earnings," he continued. "Literally thousands of Erie County residents would have continued their studies beyond the high school degree. This would have increased the odds of them living a lifetime free of poverty."

Batchelor then announced that the two foundations would provide \$300,000 to the ongoing efforts to establish a community college in Erie County. The money, he said, will help push the county's application for a

FUNDING

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community college "over the finish line."

"A plan in Harrisburg awaits action," he said. "Our leading business organizations, philanthropists, county government, our mayor, religious organizations, nonprofit leaders, school superintendents, other grant makers, including ECGRA (the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority), countless citizens, even local

higher education has come on board in support of a local community college. Clearly, our time is now."

The \$300,000 grant to the nonprofit Empower Erie will fund an "action plan" rolled out last week by the nonprofit and members of the Erie County Community College Committee. That plan focuses on re-energizing and remobilizing support for a community college among elected officials, including Erie's state delegation and Gov. Tom Wolf.

It will use paid media, earned media and social media to bolster support in the hopes

that the state Department of Education and Board of Education will back Erie County's application for a community college. The application has been idling in Harrisburg for more than two years. Erie County would be the financial sponsor of the community college if the state board grants the charter, which would be the 15th in the state and the first granted in more than 25 years.

The renewed focus on the application comes weeks after an alternative proposal to partner with the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College

for community college education failed to materialize.

The \$300,000 is drawn down from about \$4 million previously committed by the foundations and the ECGRA for the college. Of that \$4 million, \$3.33 million remains available, according to the Erie Community Foundation.

Ron DiNicola, a member of Empower Erie and the Community College Committee, thanked Batchelor for the support.

"We simply would not be able to do what we are doing and to get to where we are today" without the assistance,

he said. "It's been a long road, longer than we had hoped. We had hoped that we would have a board of trustees in place and that we'd be offering community college courses by now. That's not the way sometimes these things go, but we have stayed the course. And importantly, our friends of the effort in the community have stayed the course, like the Community Foundation in particular."

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