



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

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT
FOR
JULY
2025**



ECGRA Communications Services Report

June 2025 Comms.

BiWeekly Meeting with ECGRA Executive Director

Ongoing Social Media Management

Ongoing Consulting

IMPLEMENTED

June social media posts
BiWeekly planning meeting with the Executive Director
ECGRA Report copy writing and editing
Outreach for grant awardee content gathering
Social Media Graphic: Performance Audit

IN PROGRESS

ECGRA Report Design

IN PLANNING

ECGRA Report Release Roll Out
Planning calendar for photography content gathering at Special Events



Tammi Michali

From: Antwane Fields <afields@erie.pa.us>
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 1:00 PM
To: Tom Maggio
Cc: Tom Lenox; Melanie Szoszorek; Hayden Foltz; Tammi Michali
Subject: RE: Grant Application
Attachments: Antwan Fields.vcf

External Sender - From: (Antwane Fields <afields@erie.pa.us>)

[Learn More](#)

This message came from outside your organization.

Dear ECGRA Board Members,

On behalf of the PAL Organization, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the generous \$10,000 grant funding you have awarded us. This support is vital to our mission and will significantly impact the programs we offer to our community.

Your commitment to fostering positive change through grant-making allows organizations like ours to continue making a difference. With this funding, we plan to enhance our initiatives, reach more of our community's youth, and create a greater impact in the areas we serve.

We appreciate your belief in our vision and the work we do. We look forward to sharing our progress with you and hope to continue our partnership. Again, Thank you for your support and being a crucial ally in our mission. I will also take care of the 2021 closeout report in the coming days.

Warm regards,



From: Tom Maggio <tmaggio@ecgra.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 11:57 AM
To: Antwane Fields <afields@erie.pa.us>
Cc: Tom Lenox <tlenox@erie.pa.us>; Melanie Szoszorek <mszoszorek@erie.pa.us>; Hayden Foltz <hfoltz@erie.pa.us>;

Tammi Michali

From: Jaimie Miller <jacey78@presqueisleaudubon.org>
Sent: Friday, May 23, 2025 11:14 AM
To: Tom Maggio
Cc: Tammi Michali; President PresqueIsleAudubon
Subject: Re: Presque Isle Audubon, Festival of the Birds

Be Careful With This Message

[Learn More](#)

From (Jaimie Miller <jacey78@presqueisleaudubon.org>, External)

Potential Impersonation

The sender's identity could not be verified and someone may be impersonating the sender. Take caution when interacting with this message.

Our event was a huge success! We are still collecting surveys and photos from the attendees and hope to share more on our social media and our next newsletter!

I did attach one photo with our closeout, but have many more available! It just would not allow me to select more than one. I was also unable to attach the program due to size, but it is available on our website here:

https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66f9bd45cd737d00debd4738/6822f686947a15045d786f80_Online%20program%202025.pdf

Thank you again for your support and making this event possible! We hope to work with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

--

Jaimie Miller

Presque Isle Audubon

301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 8



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

June 16, 2025

To our Friends at ECGRA,

On behalf of the YMCA of Corry, I want to sincerely thank you for your generous support and sponsorship of the 2025 CorryFest Chainsaw Carving Festival, held June 12–15.

Your partnership was instrumental in helping us deliver a vibrant community event that brought together people from all over the region. The success of the festival, highlighted by the impressive chainsaw carving, was made possible by your commitment to supporting local organizations and initiatives.

We deeply appreciate ECGRA's dedication to investing in community growth and enrichment. Your support not only helped make CorryFest a memorable experience for attendees but also strengthened the spirit of our community.

Thank you again for your generosity and continued partnership. We look forward to working together in the years ahead.

With gratitude,


Michele Brady, CEO



Dear Tom & Tammi,

Thank you so much to
you & your team for investing into
the Jerke Effect Film Festival!
We cannot wait to show you
what we've got in store this
year. We are so grateful & so
excited to further develop this
relationship with ECGRA
-Katie Nixon

ECGRA invests almost \$1M in early childhood education

BY MARYANN MOOK
Correspondent

Staff workers at child care centers, day care centers and learning centers who have at least a childcare development associate or above are entitled to funding (bonuses) based on the fact that they hold that degree.

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) recently announced it has been awarded \$2.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from Erie County to support local child care providers and begin addressing the region's critical shortage of early childhood education services, according to a press release from ECGRA.

ECGRA awarded \$991,785.38 in Early Childhood Educator Retention Awards to 59 deserving early childcare centers across Erie County, during a check presentation and press conference at St. Martin Early Learning Center on Thursday, May 22.

"Child care is essential infrastructure – not just for families, but for the economy as a whole," said Perry Wood, executive director of ECGRA. "This ARPA investment allows us to support the providers who care for our children and give them the resources they need to deliver safe, high-quality, and accessible early education."

Early Connections, a day care center/nursery and child care provider at 16380 Route 8, Union City, is one of the child-care centers that received money from the ARPA funds.

Early Connections received \$23,683.

Michelle Harkins, executive director of Early Connections, said the ECGRA grant can provide bonuses to teachers that are direct care staff.

"They need to be working in a class program, need to have worked at least one year in a childcare center and need to have the first credential at least," Harkins said.

As far as credentials, they must have at least a childcare development associate (CDA) degree, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree or higher.

"The teachers then qualify and will be able to receive this bonus that goes into their paycheck," Harkins said.

Harkins said the level of degree determines the level of their bonus.

This investment represents the first phase of a broader, multi-step initiative to strengthen Erie County's early learning infrastructure. Funding will be distributed to licensed child care providers to improve staff recruitment and retention, enhance daily operations, and expand access for families, according to the press release.

◀ See ECGRA, P.2

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

The Corry Journal • www.thecorryjournal.com

ECGRA

(Continued from front page)

According to Start Strong PA, Erie County had 93 unfilled early childhood education staff positions. If filled, those positions could provide care for an estimated 744 additional children. Providers across the county report significant challenges in both recruiting new educators and retaining existing staff – issues that have only intensified in recent years.

"This is of the things that might help retain staff and encourage them to get their credentials down the road so they could qualify for a bonus if this opportunity arises again," Harkins said.

"When we invest in child care, we're investing in our children's future," said Kenya Johnson, director of The Learning Ladder Early

Child Care Center, a child care center at 2502 Peach St., Erie, which received \$18,300.50. "We're incredibly grateful to ECGRA and Erie County for recognizing the urgent need in our field. This support helps us meet the moment and build a more sustainable future for child care in our community."

This investment is designed to serve as a catalyst for long-term, systemic change – offering targeted support to those on the front lines and ensuring that more children and families in Erie County have access to reliable, high-quality care.

Editor's note: This project is supported, in whole or in part, by the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund grant awarded to Erie County, Pennsylvania by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Thursday, June 12, 2025

The Corry Journal • www.thecorryjournal.com

Union City accepting applications for Renaissance Grant funds

BY MARYANN MOOK

Correspondent

Union City Borough is accepting applications for another round of funds from the residential Renaissance Grant Program.

The borough has received \$100,000 to be awarded in grant funds.

The Renaissance Grant funds are provided through the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA). The purpose of the Renaissance Grant Program is to remove housing blight, reverse deterioration, incentivize and spur private investment, make neighborhoods and communities more attractive, increase the market value of homes and improve the municipal tax base.

This round of funding includes residential properties on West High Street, South Street, the Avenues, North Main Street, South Main Street, East High Street and Route 97 within the borough limits.

"We've been getting a lot of inquiries about when funding would be available," Borough Manager Cindy Wells said. "So, we encourage people to contact us to apply now that this round of funding is open."

There are not any income requirements,

but those requesting a grant must fill out an application. The application process is open and runs through Aug. 31. The grant is made on a 1:1 matching basis, and the maximum grant award is \$5,000.

The following types of improvements are permitted: doors and windows visible from the street; roofs, soffits, gutters and downspouts; exterior lighting; porches, stairs and steps; painting, siding and shutters; chimney and masonry repairs; sidewalks; and driveway aprons.

Grants will be awarded based upon the level of improvements and the vitality and significant impact the project would make to a neighborhood.

All grant applications must be approved by Union City Borough Council.

The initial grant application deadline is June 19, 2020. This will allow property owners to possibly have their projects completed in 2020. If there is additional funding available, another round of applications will be received. The guidelines and applications are available online at unioncitypa.us or at the Union City Borough Office, 13 S. Main St., during normal business hours.

For more information, call the borough office at 814-438-2331.

Applications now being accepted for grant program

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Impact Corry announced on Wednesday that it is currently accepting applications for the Renaissance Block Grant Program.

The Renaissance Block Grant Program is a 1:1 matching grant program that makes funds available to improve the functionality and curb appeal of residential homes. Homeowners and landlords may receive up to \$5,000 per property for eligible exterior repairs. Homeowners meeting income requirements may qualify for a higher amount and smaller match requirement. Potential applicants should review the Renaissance Block Grant Program guidelines and application, which can be found at www.impactcorry.org, for additional information.

A public information session about the grant program will be held at 6 p.m. on Thursday, June 26, at the Corry Community Center, 15 S. First Ave. Advance registration is not required.

◀ See **Home**, P.2

Home

(Continued from front page)

Since 2020, Impact Corry has invested over \$430,000 in grant funding for improvement projects benefiting just over 100 residential properties through the Renaissance Block program. Renaissance Block grants have helped fund sidewalk and driveway replacement, re-siding, roof replacement and painting as well as porch, step, window and door repair and replacement, improving properties' curb appeal.

Because the program requires homeowner match, the total investment in these properties was well over \$900,000.

These totals do not include \$89,500 in grant funding that has been awarded in support of 19 projects to be completed in 2025, nor the additional \$120,000 that is available in 2025 to sup-

port higher award amounts for homeowners meeting income qualifications. Also new this year is the expansion of the program footprint, so that a larger area of the city is served by the program.

Granting agencies that have supported Impact Corry's home improvement grant program since its inception include the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA), Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), and the Corry Community Foundation. Corporate support has come from KeyBank and Erie Insurance.

The long-term goals of the program are to improve the condition of Corry's housing stock, retain and attract homeowners and strengthen the city's tax base.

Additional program information can be found on Impact Corry's website (listed above) under "Neighborhoods."

Council to Davis: Release money owed to ECGRA

A.J.

Rao

Erie Times-News USA TODAY NETWORK

Erie County Council is sending a clear message to the Brenton Davis administration: it stands with the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

In a 5–1 vote on June 17, council passed a resolution affirming support of ECGRA and urging the Davis administration to release the more than \$500,000 in gaming funds owed to the authority, as identified in a recent state audit.

The resolution also calls for an end to the administration's public attacks on the authority, which the audit found to be compliant with state law.

Councilman Rock Copeland, who introduced the resolution, said the measure was a direct response to Davis, who in recent public interviews,

refused to commit to releasing the money owed to ECGRA.

“Absolutely I’m not committing to any of that,” Davis said during a recent Talk Erie radio interview.

The administration has said it is conducting a “legal review” of the audit’s findings, according to a June 3 statement to the Erie Times-News.

Davis, a Republican, also expressed dissatisfaction in the scope of the audit, which covered a period from 2021 through March 31, 2024. He argued that many of his concerns predate that period, a view echoed by Republican Councilman Charlie Bayle, the lone dissenting vote.

“While I accept the auditor’s report, I would have liked for it to have gone back and looked at some other things more thoroughly,” Bayle said.

Copeland: Davis ignoring his own audit request

Copeland, a Democrat, pushed back, accusing Davis of disregarding the very audit he helped initiate.

Advertisement

“You believe in the auditor general enough to call for his audit, then you get those results — and suddenly you’re not happy with it?” Copeland said. “Now you’re going to defy the auditor general when he says you owe ECGRA money?”

The audit, which was requested by Davis, state Sen. Dan Laughlin and a group of state lawmakers in early 2024, came after Davis raised concerns about ECGRA’s finances and adherence to state laws. The audit discovered that ECGRA was not only in compliance but entitled to \$538,000 in gaming funds from the county.

Copeland added, “I think it’s quite impressive that after an exhaustive search of all of ECGRA’s finances, they didn’t find any problems — and the only violation ... they found was that the county owes ECGRA money.”

ECGRA to hold June 19 board meeting

The ECGRA board is scheduled to meet June 19 at 8:30 a.m. at 5240 Knowledge Parkway. The meeting can also be viewed via Zoom. A link is available on the ECGRA website.

Republican Councilwoman Ellen Schauerman was absent from the June 17 meeting.

A.J. Rao can be reached at arao@gannett.com. Follow him on X @ETNRao.

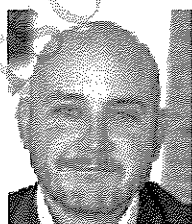
Erie County pays \$500K to ECGRA

A.J. Rao

Erie Times-News

USA TODAY NETWORK

The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority has received a \$538,247.74 payment from the county, following a state audit that uncovered a misallocation of funds owed to the authority.



Wood

ECGRA Executive Director Perry Wood confirmed receipt of the check on June 23, three weeks after the Pennsylvania Auditor General's Office released the findings of a performance audit of ECGRA. The audit, which reviewed ECGRA's operations from 2021 through March 2024, concluded that the authority was not only in compliance with state law but entitled to funds from the county.

Initially, the administration of County Executive Brenton Davis declined to publicly commit to releasing

See ECGRA, Page 2A

the funds. In an email to ECGRA, the county's finance director also indicated that the county might only issue a partial payment, citing a \$500,000 grant ECGRA owes the county for reimbursing snow removal costs.

Wood rejected the idea of netting out these debts as bad accounting practices. He added that ECGRA agreed to pay up to \$500,000 for snow removal but the county has only provided documentation for roughly \$438,000.

"We should send them a check for \$438,000 and they should send us a check for \$538,000 from the gaming fund — that's the cleanest way to do this," Wood told the Erie Times-News in an earlier interview.

The delay prompted Erie County Council to pass a resolution urging the Davis administration to cut the check. ECGRA's board also agreed to draft a letter reinforcing that request.

The receipt of the check sets the stage for ECGRA and the county to establish a formal reconciliation process to ensure gaming revenue is properly distributed between the entities, according to Wood.

"Our top priority is always to ensure that gaming funds are being distributed in accordance with the law," he said. "As a public authority, we take seriously the detailed accounting of each dollar and are hopeful that this is an indication that the county executive's office will finally engage in a year-end reconciliation process — it's an important step that should not be minimized, as evidenced by the auditor general's findings."

Why did the county owe ECGRA money?

Under state law, gaming revenue from Presque Isle Downs & Casino must be split evenly between the county and ECGRA, with \$1 million from ECGRA's share designated for the Erie County Land Bank.

The audit found that the county had been using a 55/45 split in its favor without conducting annual reconciliations. As gaming revenue increased, the county ended up receiving more than the intended \$1 million difference, resulting in a \$538,248 shortfall for ECGRA between 2021 and 2024.

ECGRA Board Chairwoman Kelly Hess noted in an April 29 letter to state Auditor General Tim DeFoor that ECGRA requested a reconciliation of the 2023 funds in January 2024 and followed up in June 2024 but did not get a

response from the county.

ECGRA is also owed an additional \$177,920 for 2024, according to ECGRA Board Solicitor Tim Wachter.

Wood said he has not yet received an update regarding those funds. He noted that the matter is expected to be addressed as part of a reconciliation process moving forward.

The state audit was requested by Davis, state Sen. Dan Laughlin and a slate of state lawmakers in early 2024. The request came after Davis raised concerns about ECGRA's finances and adherence to state laws.

ECGRA is public entity established to invest local share gaming funds from Presque Isle Downs & Casino into projects that promote economic development, community revitalization and quality of life in Erie County.

A.J. Rao can be reached at arao@gannett.com. Follow him on X @ETNRao.

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