



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

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



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 3,090,740.99 +  
 170,400.81 -  
 0000  
 2,920,340.18 \*

July 25, 2019

James Sparber  
 Finance Director  
 Erie County Courthouse  
 140 W 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 111  
 Erie, PA 16501-1011

Dear Mr. Sparber:

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act 42 of 2017, the Department is required to distribute quarterly the Local Share Assessment collected for slots to the municipalities in which a licensed gaming entity is located. This distribution is based on the local share assessment amount collected plus the slot machine license operation fee amount collected over Summit Township's budget limitation. Based on the formula provided in the legislation, the Land Bank Jurisdiction annual amount has been paid in full this quarter.

Erie County: \$2,920,340.18  
 Land Bank Jurisdiction: \$170,400.81

An ACH for the second quarter of 2019 payment in the amount of \$3,090,740.99 should be deposited in your bank account within 3 - 5 business days. This payment includes the slots local share assessment of \$590,740.99 and the slot machine license operation fee of \$2,500,000.00. Any reductions to the Gross Terminal Revenue (GTR) for promotional items is the result of the Gaming Bulletin 2015-01 and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's April 28, 2014 decision in Greenwood Gaming and Entertainment Incorporated v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Revenue (90 A.3d 699 (Pa. 2014)).

If you have any questions, please contact me at 717-346-4004.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Heckert*

Jennifer Heckert, Gaming Division Chief  
 Bureau of Fiscal Management

*Erie County 067-021010-042100  
 2,920,340.18 x .55 = \$1,606,187.10*

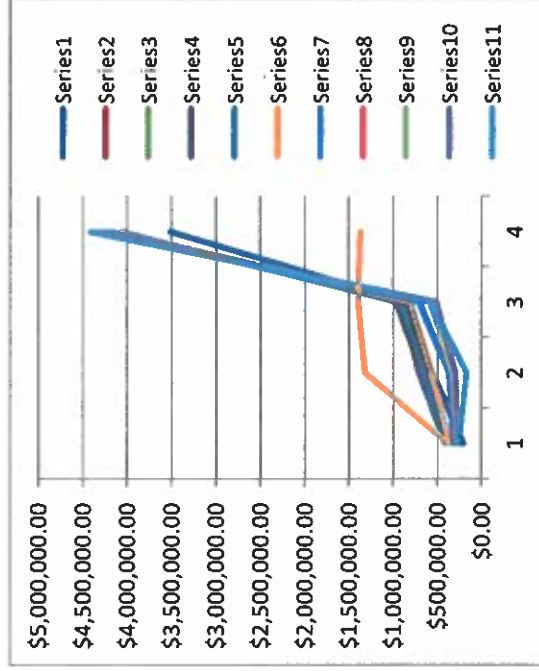
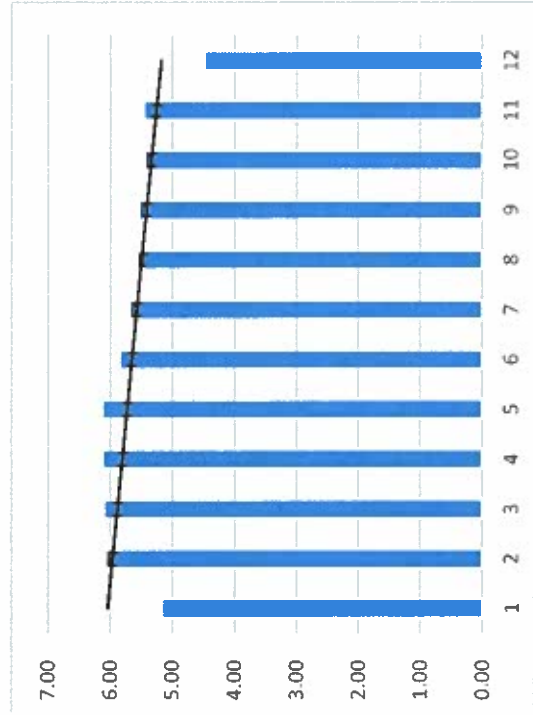
*ECGRA 067-021050-042100  
 2,920,340.18 x .45 = \$1,314,153.08*

*Land Bank 067-021018-042100  
 170,400.81*

**Revenue Dashboard  
by Quarter  
2007 - 2018 YTD**



Year	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	Total
2007	201,418.07	562,082.72	867,508.44	3,507,952.54	5,138,961.77
2008	366,211.37	672,936.98	941,125.00	4,063,561.53	6,043,834.88
2009	407,507.87	701,525.21	898,525.69	4,060,932.24	6,068,491.01
2010	385,476.85	665,559.96	962,909.94	4,073,449.24	6,087,395.99
2011	393,440.61	636,302.96	903,421.25	4,166,222.13	6,099,386.95
2012	356,241.99	554,752.50	794,443.73	4,114,583.35	5,820,021.57
2013	318,869.71	374,557.04	701,478.54	4,261,932.00	5,656,837.29
2014	281,934.65	315,628.24	584,126.03	4,350,692.65	5,532,381.57
2015	264,934.67	308,566.19	541,749.43	4,390,710.21	5,505,960.50
2016	271,003.84	300,719.61	507,757.83	4,332,642.04	5,412,123.32
2017	254,570.93	172,041.71	578,894.78	4,412,495.64	5,418,003.06
2018	375,769.51	1,317,928.22	1,394,780.33	1,362,089.40	4,450,567.46
2019	373,319.64	1,314,153.08			
<b>4,250,699.71</b>	<b>7,896,754.42</b>	<b>9,676,720.99</b>	<b>47,097,262.97</b>	<b>68,921,438.09</b>	





# Ridge Policy Group Activity ECGRA July 15 – August 15 Report

## RPG Relevant Meetings and Calls

- Call with PA officials over algae bloom to get advice on state funding opportunities to address harmful activity in lake
- To hold a meeting with Senator Laughlin in Erie and mention problems related to ECGRA on 8/13
- To hold a meeting with ECGRA on North East Borough issues on 8/14
- To hold a meeting with Perry Wood and Councilman Foust on 8/14
- To meet with Ridge Environmental Center on 8/14 to discuss algae bloom in Erie
- To meet with Karl Sanchak, Erie Innovation District, on 8/14

## RPG Additional Relevant Activity

- Provided advice to Karl Sanchak of Innovation District on RACP and federal EDA funding
- Sent federal and state funding opportunities to address Erie's algae bloom

## Funding Opportunities Presented

### **Federal Opportunities:**

#### **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative accelerates efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

All projects must support one of the GLRI focus areas:

- **Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern**
- Invasive Species
- Nonpoint Source Pollution Impacts on Nearshore Health (formerly Nearshore Health and Nonpoint Source Pollution FY2010-2014)
- Habitat and Species (formerly Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration FY2010-2014)
- Foundations for Future Restoration Actions (formerly Accountability, Education, Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication and Partnerships FY2010-2014)

Funding is typically available in February and July of each year.

More information can be found [here](#).

### **NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science**

NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) typically has up to 30 new and continuing harmful algal bloom (HAB) research awards over the last several years. NCCOS HAB competitive research programs develop science-based solutions to address expanding HAB impacts that are affecting coastal resources and economies in every U.S. coastal region. HAB species and impacts vary regionally and NCCOS projects are advancing the understanding of bloom toxicity, applying new technologies to detect HABs and their toxins in the field, producing HAB forecasts, and exploring HAB prevention and control methods. Summaries of new and continued research projects by region are below. NCCOS projects are the result of a rigorous competitive peer-review process that ensures support for the highest quality science.

This year's funding opportunity was from January – February and it is expected to be similar next year. More information can be found [here](#).

### **Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)**

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program is a federal-state partnership that provides communities a permanent, independent source of low-cost financing for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects. Funds are available for the implementation of a variety of watershed pollution management activities related to HABs, including: removal of leaking or damaged septic systems, implementation of agricultural BMPs such as no-till equipment and manure management measures, and wetland restoration. Other projects to prevent the degradation of water quality that are less focused on drinking water systems, but still impact source water, include green infrastructure and stormwater management activities.

More information can be found [here](#).

### **319 Grant Program for States and Territories**

Under Section 319, states, territories and tribes receive grant money that supports a wide variety of activities including technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, demonstration projects and monitoring to assess the success of specific nonpoint source implementation projects.

More information can be found [here](#).

### **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

USDA provides funding through the RCPP to foster restoration efforts and the sustainable use of soil, water, flora, and fauna at regional and watershed scales. Through the RCPP, funding recipients partner with agricultural producers to help the producers implement and maintain conservation activities in defined project areas. The partners administer RCPP funding to local project participants and stakeholders. Funds have previously been provided to water and sewer districts for watershed conservation projects. RCPP funding is allocated at the national level, state level, and for **critical conservation areas such as the Great Lakes, Mississippi River watershed, and Chesapeake Bay**. State entities administer state-specific funds. A project can be eligible for funding at all levels. Funding is provided in accordance with the rules of EQIP, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other USDA conservation programs.



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
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 4,269,995</b>



## Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

Tuesday, August 6, 2019  
11:30am – 1:00pm  
5240 Knowledge Parkway, Erie, PA 16510

### AGENDA

1. Discussion: North East Revitalization Fund
  
2. Mission Main Street – Round 3
  - a. Borough of Girard
  - b. Erie Neighborhood Growth Partnership
  - c. Impact Corry
  - d. Union City Pride, Inc.
  - e. Waterford Borough
  
3. Multi-Municipal Collaboration – Round 2
  - a. Borough of North East
  - b. City of Erie
  - c. Girard Township
  - d. West County Paramedic Association
  - e. West Erie County Emergency Management Agency



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 2019

For more information:

Liz Wilson / [lizwilson@psu.edu](mailto:lizwilson@psu.edu)

814-898-6541

-Or-

Brian Slawin / [bks185@psu.edu](mailto:bks185@psu.edu)

814-898-6539

**JOIN US AS SIX LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS PITCH FOR UP TO \$10,000!**

**ERIE, PA** – Have you heard of Efficient Nomads, Hippoh, Fish Gods, Scouted.GG, Blue Serenity, or HPG Industries? If not, you soon will! With funding support from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and business mentors provided by Ben Franklin and Gannon’s Small Business Development Center, the local entrepreneurs behind these startups have been participating in Ben Franklin’s business startup accelerator, the TechCelerator@Erie. On August 21, 2019, they will each make a graduation pitch to a panel of judges from the community. **The winner will walk away with up to \$10,000!**

Come out and support these home-grown entrepreneurs, each of whom will have the opportunity to share with the audience and the judges their intended target market, the problem that their solution solves, and how their idea will make money for themselves as well as their investors. Ben Franklin has been offering the TechCelerator Program throughout our 32-county footprint for nearly eight years. The resulting startup activity and job creation has been exciting. Our pitch nights are attended by not only the friends and family of the presenters, but also community partners, local dignitaries, economic development professionals, other startups, and even potential investors.

**While the judges deliberate, stay and enjoy a fun networking reception!**

**When:** Wednesday, August 21, 2019

**Where:** Ben Franklin’s Erie Office/Knowledge Center, 5240 Knowledge Parkway  
For Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/rnupTegjbLF2>

**Time:** Pitches begin at 5:00 pm – catered networking reception to follow

**RSVP:** [heidisullivan@psu.edu](mailto:heidisullivan@psu.edu) or 814-898-6650 by August 16, 2019

**About the Ben Franklin TechCelerator @Erie**

With funding support from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA), the TechCelerator is helping to accelerate Erie counties early-stage deal flow by creating an environment that allows those who have considered starting a tech-business to explore the likelihood of success with the benefit of professional guidance. Emerging entrepreneurs who participate in our business startup boot camps are more likely to make an educated decision on how and when to move forward with their business concept, while learning about how to apply for startup funding. <https://cnp.benfranklin.org/techcelerator-at-erie/>



## From the Desk of Sr. Annette

Some are square, some round, some crescent or tear-drop. They may be midnight blue, lime green, brilliant yellow, muted tan. Each is beautiful in its own right. Together, though, the mosaic that they create paints a picture unlike any other. Each piece is judiciously selected and carefully placed. Some may need to be trimmed, some are perfect the way they are. The mosaic is *more than the sum of the parts*.



This phrase was first coined by the philosopher Aristotle and aptly defines the modern concept of synergy. For anyone who has played team sports, it echoes the T.E.A.M. acronym—together, everyone achieves more.

Whether creating the three mosaics that will grace the east garden at the Art House, or pooling all the painting and cutting of plastic bottles to create a Chihuly-like sculpture, or together planting the wall garden, the children found that working together is more productive than working alone.

In a culture that often stresses individual accomplishment over communal endeavors, it is a good life lesson for all of us.

*Sister Annette*

INNER-CITY NEIGHBORHOOD Art House  
Tuesday, August 13th  
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Erie Gives  
Spread the Word  
Your gift will provide classes in the performing arts to hundreds of students!  
<https://www.ecgra.org/organization/inner-city-neighborhood-art-house>

## New Neighborhood Art House Sign Installed



The Neighborhood Art House sign that had long been a dream is now a reality. The identification portion of the sign features the new Art House logo; the message section will display information of upcoming events, notices, and inspirational messages. The first message read: *We love our new sign! Thank you to ECGRA, Erie Insurance, and the Blake Family Foundation.*

## Donor Corner



### Nine local companies show their support through EITC contributions

Nine companies generously contributed to the Art House through Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program this year: C A Curtze Co., Erie Insurance, KnoxLaw, MacDonald Illig Attorneys, Marquette Savings Bank, MaxPro Technologies, Plastikos, Inc., PNC Bank, and Scott's Splash Lagoon, Inc.

EITC is a way for businesses to enrich educational opportunities for students and earn tax credits by donating to an Educational Improvement Organization. The current EITC



contributions for this year's Fall of '18 - May of '19 application period is a rousing \$135,183.00!

The Art House was also awarded an additional \$85,754 through a number of grants including the Northwestern Pennsylvania Food Council for \$30,021.82,

RBC-USA Regional Grant for \$2,500, and The Erie Community Foundation - Summer Camp Grant for \$3,960 which will all be used toward programming costs.

Sometimes, when you least expect it, good things happen! On July 5<sup>th</sup>, Red Letter Hospitality held a soft opening Charity Event of their new restaurant, Molly Brannigan's, with all lunch and dinner proceeds to benefit the Neighborhood Art House. We were welcomed with outstanding support and a check for \$5,000.



All of these donations have been put towards a number of significant needs including increased security equipment, exterior improvements, and materials and equipment for children's classes.

You, our donors, are our lifeline for our student programs and we could not do it without you.

Thank you!

"For it is in GIVING that we RECEIVE." - St. Francis of Assisi and it is your giving for which we are forever grateful!

*Kelly Stolar*

Kelly Stolar, CFRE  
Development Director

# Meeting kicks off Union City downtown initiative

BY STEVE BISHOP  
Contributing writer

UNION CITY — A \$50,000 initiative to create a master plan for Union City's downtown, including individualized plans for most of its buildings, kicked off in front of about 50 people recently at the Union City American Legion.

The crowd included downtown local business and property owners, government officials from Union City and Erie County, historical preservation officials, representatives of the nonprofit Union City Pride and the Union City Community Foundation, and others. Union City Borough is using a \$25,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, and matching funds from the borough (\$2,000), the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (\$10,000) and the community foundation (\$13,000) to fund the initiative.

Borough Secretary/Treasurer Cindy Wells introduced representatives from the selected architectural and consulting firms that have already started gathering information and meeting with downtown property owners — citySTUDIO of Pittsburgh, and T&B Planning of Murrysville, Pa. Those representatives, over two hours, outlined their process for creating

the master plan, initiated a discussion about downtown improvement ideas with the crowd during a break-out session, and left the crowd with words of encouragement.

Ryan England of citySTUDIO said he and his colleagues have worked in many downtowns through the years, including several smaller communities similar to Union City.

"Your Main Street looks really great. It's a great business district," he said.

Tracy Zinn of T&B Planning told the crowd that the plan will be completed this year. The process, she said, includes engaging the public, creating an inventory of the downtown's buildings and their historical assets, developing a list of downtown challenges and opportunities, drafting the overall and individualized preservation plans, and two or three rounds of revisions before the final product will be completed.

She stressed that utilizing the plans, and adherence to the suggestions and recommendations, is entirely voluntary. The goals of the initiative, Zinn said, include attracting investment and entrepreneurs to the downtown, enhancing the value of the buildings, and increasing the community's awareness of its assets.

◀ See Meeting, P.2

# Meeting

(Continued from front page)

She also said the planners will strive to create realistic improvement plans, with accompanying cost projections, that building owners can actually implement.

Zinn has seen a lot of historic preservation plans with lots of vision, but not so practical in terms of costs and time.

"So we're taking a very practical approach to the project," Zinn said.

Aiding the property owners, said Cindy Wells, is a pool of \$30,000 available in 2019 that can provide one-to-one funding matches of up to \$10,000. Those funds come from a \$200,000 Mission Main Street program grant awarded to Union City from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA). More of those ECGRA matching funds will be made available in 2020, she said.

Zinn said project results will include establishing an "architectural theme" for the downtown, identifying streetscape elements, and providing recommendations on things like windows and doors, lighting, landscaping, open spaces, and materials that fit each specific use.

She said that the guidelines will provide building owners a tool — to be used

now or in the future — to make improvements. The design guidelines can be critical in helping building owners do preservation the right way. Using the wrong materials or in the wrong way, she said, "could devalue the building's historic value."

Economic development benefits of Union City undertaking the planning initiative, said Zinn, include maintaining the downtown's authenticity, restoring the tax base, creating jobs, and stimulating private investment. Community development benefits, she said, include connecting citizens to their past, reviving community spirit, and encouraging local participation.

She noted Pennsylvania continues to invest in such initiatives because "there is real evidence that historical preservation works, for economic development for communities."

England noted the individual building plans will include recommendations for both exterior and interior work, including ideas for using vacant available space, such as second floors.

"Union City's downtown has a lot of good things going on, and a lot of potential for the future," England said.



Sunday, July 21, 2019

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Glenn Stearns takes a call on May 8 while searching abandoned buildings in Erie during the filming for the Discovery Channel reality television show called "Undercover Billionaire," where Stearns comes to Erie with only \$100 and tries to create a million-dollar business in 90 days. That business became Underdog Barbecue, 3040 W. Lake Road, in Millcreek Township. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## Reality TV show sets out to launch \$1 million business in Erie

By Matthew Bink  
matt@timesnews.com

When R. J. Messenger announced in a lengthy but cryptic social media post in late June that he was putting on hiatus Iron Empire Clothing, the successful apparel company he co-founded in 2014, to focus on a new venture, he

was amazed how many rumors he started hearing about himself.

"I can reassure you that this is a good thing," he wrote to followers on Facebook, "and mark my words, Underdog BBQ and Iron Empire, along with myself and a few others, will be putting Erie on the map like never before and give our city something to truly be proud of."

A camera crew had been following

Messenger and others around for weeks and all the commotion had started to raise eyebrows.

About a week later, when the Discovery Channel announced the premiere of a new reality show set in Erie, people started to connect the dots.

People like Erie businessman Pete Zapuris, who owns the former

See UNDERCOVER, A6

### "Undercover Billionaire"

The series, filmed in Erie, is scheduled to premiere Aug. 6 at 9 p.m. on the Discovery Channel.

See the official trailer for "Undercover Billionaire" at [www.tnt.com/undercover-billionaire](http://www.tnt.com/undercover-billionaire).

## UNDERCOVER

From Page A1

Metropolitan dance club on West 13th Street, and who, without knowing exactly what was going on, allowed Discovery to use his building for filming.

"They have been in and out for two or three weeks over the last two months," Zaphiris said. "To me, it's good publicity for Erie. I just figured they could go ahead and use it if Erie could get a good plug."

The Discovery Channel will launch the eight-part series "Undercover Billionaire" on Aug. 6 at 9 p.m. It follows mogul Glenn Stearns as he arrives in Erie with just \$100 in his pocket and an old blue pickup truck. Stearns assumes a fake identity, Glenn Bryant, and sets out to create a \$1 million business in just 90 days. Even the crew Stearns assembled is kept in the dark about his true identity until late in the series.

Stearns was not allowed to see any of his wealth or connections to create the million-dollar business. Stearns, according to the Discovery Channel, will put \$1 million of his own money into the business if an independent financial evaluator assesses its value below \$1 million — even if it is a penny short.

Dawn Van Scooter, a 37-year-old North East resident who owns Ninezo Furnishings & Design House and Mercantile 89, was contacted after a client passed on her phone number to the production company. This is just a test. She was told only that she and others would be working with a man who planned to come to Erie to start his own business. She was a small business owner who did great work, they told her, and could give the man help and insight. She was intrigued.

"Helping other small business owners has always been important to me, so I was excited to be part of the project for that fact," she said. She heard nothing about the project in the months after that first meeting.

"All of a sudden I got an email and the project was moving forward," Van Scooter said.

As filming moved forward early this year, Van Scooter said, "It felt like something was up, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

"But I really truly hadn't figured it out. I don't know if I was that naive or that busy with the work I was tasked with."

Van Scooter said viewers will see just how "shocked" she was when she learned that Glenn Bryant was actually billionaire Glenn Stearns.

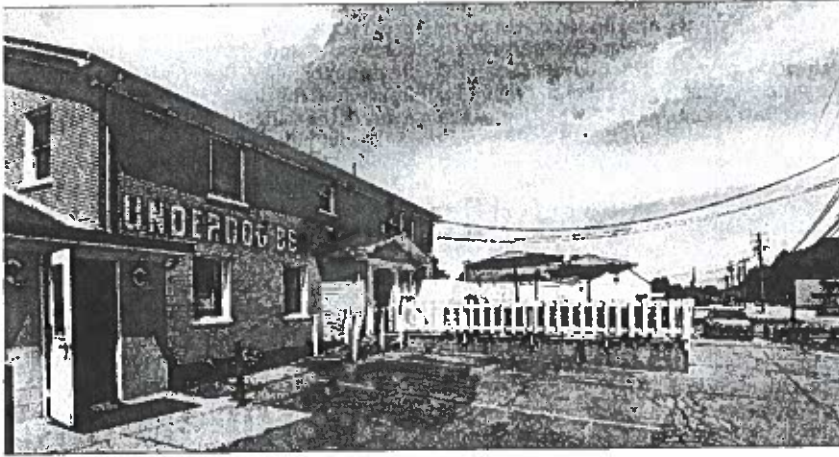
"My face never lies," she said. "It will show how surprised I was."

That Underdog BBQ plays a central role in the show is absent from the promotional videos and press releases from the Discovery Channel.

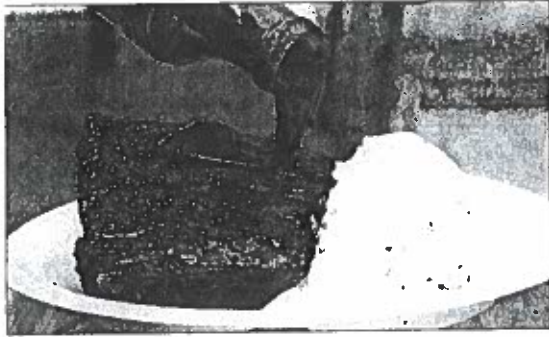
"Certainly there's a lot that I'm not ready to talk about yet," Messenger said. "Obviously, people in our area are aware of Underdog BBQ opening, but they didn't really know what it was. Now people are putting the two together. Obviously, they're putting the puzzle pieces together, which we knew was going to happen."

Underdog BBQ was among the vendors at Erie's Wild Rib Cook Off & Music Festival held in Perry Square from May 29 to June 2. It won first place overall in the ribs for juniors category and tied for first place for best ribs overall.

The Erie County Health Department licensed the business to open at its 3040 West Lake Road location in Millcreek Township on June



Underdog BBQ is shown at the Millcreek Township restaurant on Thursday. (GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS)



Diners pour sauce on ribs from Underdog BBQ during Erie's Wild Rib Cook Off & Music Festival in Erie on May 29. (GREG WOHLFORD/ERIE TIMES-NEWS)

4. It's listed as being owned by Glenn Bryant Services, a limited liability company that was registered with the Pennsylvania Department of State on March 7.

"I would have had better luck hitting the lottery and winning \$1 million dollars than this happening," Messenger said. "That's how I personally feel. Because, now, looking back at this whole thing, you're talking about a guy like Glenn Stearns and a film crew, for some reason, out of every city in the entire country, they want to pick Erie, Pennsylvania. And then, on top of that, they want to come here and look around and choose me and a handful of other people to kind of use us to say, 'Hey listen, we have this idea, do you want to help this guy out? Do you want to give him a job at your store for a little bit?'"

The show was filmed between March and June, said Tim Warren, executive producer and showrunner for the production company.

"Erie was chosen," Warren said, "because it represented a hardworking American city that was dealing with economic difficulties yet rebuilding itself through small business."

Nancy Daniels, Discovery's chief brand officer, told Business Insider in 2018 that Stearns approached Discovery with the "idea of wanting

to test himself."

"Before I met him, I was suspicious," Daniels told Business Insider, adding that he later convinced her he could pull it off.

In 1989, then 25-year-old Stearns formed Stearns Lending LLC, a mortgage company. Ernst & Young named Stearns its Entrepreneur of the Year in 2002, and by 2010 Stearns Lending had reached nearly \$1 billion a month in funding, according to a biography of Stearns and other reports. Stearns, according to his website, believes that "adversities are an ideal foundation for success."

He was born to alcoholic parents and grew up in a low-income suburb of Washington, D.C. He was diagnosed with dyslexia, failed fourth grade and became a father when he was 14. He graduated high school in the bottom 10 percent of his class.

"While some of his friends lost their lives to drugs and alcohol, and others spent time in prison, Glenn's path intersected with mentors who gave him motivating examples of how to not meet the fate of his friends and instead take control his destiny," the biography on his website says. "He took that life-changing encouragement and ran with it. Glenn became the first person in his family to attend college

and graduated with a degree in economics from Towson University."

In recent years, Stearns has battled throat cancer, which is now in remission, according to reports.

And he is no stranger to reality TV, having competed in and won "The Real Gilligan's Island" in 2004 with his wife, Mindy.

Gannon University's Small Business Development Centers, students and faculty assisted Stearns and his team with developing the business.

Maggie Horne, director of the SBDC, said she received a call a year and a half or two years ago.

"As far as we understood there was a gentleman who had been very successful in his career, had had a bout of cancer and, with having recovered from that, really had a new focus of wanting to be an integral part of entrepreneurial revival in a city that could really use it," Horne said. "They were looking at several cities, and they chose Erie."

Aside from being tailed by a camera crew, the SBDC treated Stearns as if he were any other client. They assisted him with the basics of starting a business, provided him with the other resources he needed and, as Stearns' "vision began to grow," served as a consultant for all of the "ins and outs."

Students and faculty with the Gannon Beehive researched market conditions and trends and helped Stearns learn more about the industry.

"He was phenomenal to work with," Horne, 54, said. "It was a real joy. That's why we do what we do every day. You're working with people exactly like Glenn was attempting to be, or pretending to be, at the very beginning stage of trying to become an entrepreneur. Throughout the whole time, that was my mindset, you know, 'you haven't done

this, we're going to help you.' When I found out who he really was, I was thinking, 'you needed none of my help at all.'"

Horne's respect for Stearns grew when she learned his identity because he had worked so hard to learn from others to develop the business.

"He chose to go back and do all of the same things that it took to build his empire without needing to," Horne said.

When news of the show dropped on July 2, Stearns tweeted, "So excited to announce the 'special project' I've been working on for the past few months. It's been one of the most rewarding and challenging things I've ever done."

"He is genuine," Van Scoter said. "He is down to earth. You kind of know when you meet a certain type of person who has a certain air about them. He was not that way. He's an amazing human and I am so blessed and privileged to have been able to work with him. He wanted to learn. He wanted to get his hands dirty."

Jason Lavery of Lavery Brewing Co. said the show's co-executive producer, Melinda Cea, approached him with the concept in March 2018. Lavery was not interviewed for "Undercover Billionaire" but, like Zaphiris, also welcomed the Discovery Channel crew to conduct interviews at the brewery.

The film crew visited on a Saturday, Lavery recalled. Stearns was doing a bar crawl that day, he said.

Underdog BBQ pours its own signature brew and also features taps from Lavery Brewing Co., The Brewerrie At Union Station, Erie Brewing Co., TimberCreek Tap (Meadville/Grove City) and Five & 20 Spirits & Brewing.

"Back then we really didn't understand what he was doing," Lavery said. "How does a bar crawl affect your decision to start a business? Now it makes a lot more sense."

Van Scoter, Messenger and others will fly to Los Angeles this week to take part in promotional events for the show.

"I'm very nervous about it," Van Scoter said. "It's one of those things that was the luck of the draw and you would never really expect to happen in your life. It's very exciting."

Staff writer Jim Martin contributed to this report.

Matthew Rink can be reached at 870-1884 or by email. Follow him on Twitter at [www.Twitter.com/ETNrink](http://www.Twitter.com/ETNrink).

# VIEWPOINT *Erie Corry Journal*

Corry, Pennsylvania | www.thecorryjournal.co...

Tuesday, July 23, 2019

OUR VIEW

## Tech putting down roots in Erie's core

**The issue:** Innovation economy gains traction  
**Our view:** Bold gamble showing results

**T**he headline on Oct. 13, 2016, announced: "\$10 million investment aims to transform Erie County." The funding from the Erie Community Foundation, the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and the Susan Hirt Hagen Fund for Transformational Philanthropy included \$4 million to create a new economy in Erie based on cybersecurity and technology through the creation of something known as an "innovation district."

At that moment, neither the Erie Downtown Development Corp. nor its plans to remake the downtown core existed, nor was there any hint of businessman Peter Zaphiris' vision for new offices and housing near the intersection of West 12th and Peach streets.



About the only sign of action? Velocity Network had purchased the former Rothrock Building, a then-decrepit eyesore at 121 W. 10th St. that seemed to depressingly embody downtown Erie's predicament — forsaken and neglected as residents, shops and businesses spurned the city core for the suburbs.

Erie leaders nonetheless eyed a strategy that had proven successful in other former industrial hubs — the pairing of local academic expertise with tech-based businesses to create new economic opportunities.

The fundamental changes taking place in Erie, their scale and sweep, tend to blur in the drumbeat of daily news. Focus sharpens in the long view. The bold, unlikely bid to engineer Erie's renaissance announced barely three years ago — with nothing more than a check and a notion — is starting to take concrete shape before our eyes.

Related stories Tuesday announced a \$402,500 grant to aid Gannon University's new Institute of Health and Cyber Knowledge, or I-HACK, at the Knight Tower, 131 W. Ninth St., and the demolition of the former United Way building at 120 W. 10th St., as next-door Marquette Savings Bank prepares to develop its own innovation center at West 10th and Peach streets.

That news builds on earlier progress: Both Gannon and Mercyhurst University have launched new degree programs focused on different aspects of cybersecurity. Velocity Net has moved into the former Rothrock Building, now rendered sleek and confident via an \$8.5 million makeover.

The Erie Innovation District will soon make its headquarters in the upper stories of the Downtown YMCA, 31 W. 10th St., following more attractive renovations there. The Innovation District is hosting its second accelerator for tech startups. Five of nine participants in the 2018 session sunk roots in Erie.

Erie's momentum and a strong relationship with Erie Insurance led an established New Jersey-based information technology company, ValueMomentum, to plan an Erie office that is expected to employ 100 people within three years.

Former Mercyhurst administrator David Dausey noted at the Innovation District's launch that "Erie doesn't see itself as a cool, innovative place with energy, excitement and newness."

That is getting a lot easier to do.



Sara Jukes/The Corry Journal

A newly purchased skid steer, milling head and roller were recently put to work patching Corry roads immediately after arrival. City Mechanic Clayton Repasky is operating the 2016 skid steer and milling head while streets operator Jason Knapp drives the 2018 roller.

## Newly purchased equipment arrives at public works

BY SARA JUKES  
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There have been a lot of equipment purchases made by the city of Corry, one with the use of a collaborative grant, and the deliveries were made in the last several weeks.

A three-parcel package including a 2016 KSD280 skid steer, a 24-inch high flow milling head and 2018

roller arrived recently and was put to use right away.

The skid steer, used with the newly purchased milling head, and the roller that was included in the purchase have been out working on patching streets in Corry.

The equipment has been used to mill and patch potholes in Corry and is getting work done about twice as fast as what the previously

owned equipment could get done, Corry Public Works Department Lead Operator Mark Leofsky said.

The package was purchased for \$66,000, with \$39,000 taken from funds budgeted for equipment in the city's water account and \$27,000 taken from funds budgeted for equipment in the city's general account.

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## Equipment

(Continued from front page)

A 2013 Ford F550 bucket truck arrived Saturday, purchased for \$51,000 with a multi-municipal grant through a collaboration between the city of Corry, Concord Township and Wayne Township.

The three entities collaborated on an application for the grant, which was awarded by Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, who provided \$30,000, and the Tri-County Council of Governments, who provided \$30,000 in matching funds.

Remaining funds from the purchase went toward travel expenses, title transfer fees and equipment to outfit the truck, Leofsky said. Any unused funds will be split in half to return equal amounts to ECGRA and the Tri-County COG.

The bucket truck, which is a work truck with an attached aerial lift designed to lift people into the air to work, is to



Sara Jukes/The Corry Journal

A 2013 bucket truck has recently been delivered to Corry Public Works Department. Since the truck was purchased in Alabama, City Mechanic Clayton Repasky is doing a state inspection to prepare it for use.

be shared by Corry, Concord and Wayne townships.

The truck was purchased through Altec Industries in Birmingham, Alabama,

and is currently going through a state inspection by Repasky.

A 30-day warranty came with the truck, so Leofsky said the truck will be used as much as possible dur-

ing the next 30 days in order to make sure the truck has no problems.

"If we find any issues with it, then Altec will take care of all those," Leofsky said.