

**OTTAWA COUNTY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION**  
**Jamie N. Beier Grant, Director**

The Ottawa County Improvement Corporation (OCIC)'s mission is to serve as the lead economic and workforce development agency in Ottawa County. Our vision is to become a recognized strategic resource for the Ottawa County business community, where OCIC engagement enhances private sector profitability, encourages capital investment and demonstrates job creation. OCIC does this through an integrated approach that includes Business Retention & Expansion, New Business Attraction, Workforce Development and Communications & Marketing.

The top strategic resources provided to clients includes – workforce development and job creation services, private investment assistance, gap financing, pre-employment testing, public infrastructure assistance and connecting education & industry.

In 2017, OCIC completed 124 business visits with small, medium and large operations throughout the county. Fifty-six percent of visits were with small businesses, twenty-three percent with medium sized business and nineteen percent with large businesses. As the economic development profession always notes, most investment in any community comes out of businesses already here, which is why supporting existing companies remains OCIC's top priority.

A major priority of the OCIC in 2017 has been utilizing every effort we can to preserve and retain the Davis Besse Nuclear Power Station. OCIC Director, Jamie Beier Grant, has been working with members of the Ohio Legislature to discuss legislative pathways to preserve the facility and has testified before the House and Senate Public Utilities Committees. Additionally, Director Beier Grant has worked with the grassroots effort Generation Atomics to build a local base of outreach to Ohio and federal leadership; was a panelist for a Nuclear Matters event at the Ohio Statehouse; participated in several legislator tours of the plant; and has travelled to Washington DC to meet with the U.S. Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Additionally, we have assisted Custom Glass Solutions by Guardian with a \$2million capital investment to enhance its growing glass product line in Millbury.

Additionally, OCIC worked with local communities to build out additional business investment tools. New Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) designations were implemented to promote commercial and industrial investments – three designations were established within the City of Port Clinton and one designation in Clay Township. These areas are already seeing new investment prospects in excess of \$10million for the community.

OCIC's Revolving Loan Fund portfolio continues to be an important tool to partner with community lenders in supporting small business investments. OCIC' Revolving Loan Fund portfolio currently stands at roughly \$436,000 in loans awarded. These loans have supported more than \$2.55million in business projects, which have created or retained 103 full-time equivalent jobs. In 2017, with the help of the OCIC RLF program, two new businesses were opened. Brown Dog Gelato is the newest addition to Mel & Barb Ayers line of exceptional

eateries and is located in Harbor Light Landing in Portage Township. Twin Oast Brewing LLC, has started construction on its \$1.7million brewery facility in Catawba Island Township. Twin Oast Brewing is a wonderful addition to our growing craft brew and winery industry, which draws residents and visitors from surrounding communities to enjoy the many things Ottawa County has to offer. Look for Twin Oast to open its doors in 2018.

OCIC also partners with Ottawa County in utilizing the Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan Fund Program (CDBG RLF Program). With this fund, OCIC has assisted two new businesses with investments reaching \$500,000 in 2017 – R Coffee Corner (Portage Township) and Scooters of PC (Port Clinton).

Hiring and matching job seekers to employment opportunities remains a top priority of the OCIC, as it is a top priority of our businesses. Today more than 9,000 job openings are listed on OhioMeansJobs.com within a 30-mile radius of Oak Harbor. While our region continues to have significant job openings that need filled, OCIC was able to assist 350+ of our job seekers in re-engaging in the workforce locally. Additionally, OCIC continues our work on training assistance for employers – one of our most valuable tools. Ninety-two training grants were awarded to local companies, totaling more than \$298,000 this year alone.

In July 2016, OCIC expanded our scope of work to include the OhioMeansJobs Ottawa County location, which serves job seekers and businesses seeking employees. In 2017, OhioMeansJobs Ottawa County's top services included pre-employment testing for local manufacturers, created/updated 665 resumes for job seekers, assisted clients with career exploration, and instructed 27 job search workshops for the public. Visit us at the OMJ-Ottawa County offices if you need job seeking assistance, resume support, practice with interview skills or desire to consider new career paths. You can also find openings on [ohiomeansjobs.com](http://ohiomeansjobs.com) or follow local job openings on social media thru outlets like "Ottawa County Jobs" on Facebook or at #getajobottawacounty on Twitter and Instagram.

Being a well-rounded organization is something very important to the OCIC. We support the Ottawa County Safety Council, an HR Network and are proud to be an integral partner in the Ottawa County Business Advisory Council, which brings K-12 educational leaders together with business leaders to advance and encourage the many local career opportunities available in Ottawa County.

Through the Business Advisory Council initiative, 505 freshman attended the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Career Showcase event, 17 high school students participated in job shadow opportunities during the 2017 school year, 4 graduated from the Career Engagement Opportunity (CEO) credit-based internship program, and a Senior Job Fair was held with 60 graduating seniors who will be entering directly into the workforce. Additionally, the Business Advisory Council was awarded \$128,500 in funding from the Ohio Department of Education to develop a targeted approach to attract talent back into the community and meet the employment needs of our businesses.

The Ottawa County Safety Council received 2016 Safety Council of the Year – Honorable Mention Award, increased membership by eight percent and increased member participation rates.

There's no doubt that this year was filled with organizational growth, private sector investment and job creation and significant momentum for moving into 2018. To learn more about OCIC, connect with us on social media, visit our website at [www.ocic.biz](http://www.ocic.biz) or contact Jamie Beier Grant at 419.898.6242.