

# DOWNTOWN AKRON QUARTERLY UPDATE

AKRON CIVIC THEATRE GENERATES \$20M+ IN ANNUAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



1ST QUARTER 2024

DOWNTOWN AKRON SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



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### **Save the Date: Wellness on the Plaza, Juneteenth**



**1,600:**  
**VISITORS TO THE 2024**  
**DOWNTOWN AKRON**  
**LUNAR NEW YEAR**  
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# DOWNTOWN AKRON, 1ST QUARTER 2024

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO? [CHECK OUT THE DAP EVENTS CALENDAR.](#)



**“IF YOU BELIEVE  
IN DOWNTOWN,  
YOU WANT TO  
KEEP INVESTING  
IN DOWNTOWN.”**

**—PRESIDENT & CEO  
OF WELTY BUILDING  
COMPANY, DON  
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**6,099:**  
LBS OF TRASH  
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**11:**  
NEW  
DOWNTOWN  
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# YOUR DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORS

## Downtown Small Businesses and Storefronts in the News

*18 women-owned restaurants, eateries to check out in Greater Akron includes The Tea Lady & Chameleon Café, by Kerry Clawson, Tawney Beans and Mark Price, Akron Beacon Journal: In honor of Women's History Month, we've put together a list of women-owned or co-owned restaurants and food businesses in the Akron area that we've profiled in recent years. That said, it doesn't have to be March to patronize these businesses, if you catch our drift.*

*"I've had afternoon tea at the Ritz in Cleveland and at the Drake in Chicago, among other tea outings over the years. But I'd never experienced all the fine touches and assortment of foods that I enjoyed at The Tea Lady."*

Now located at 35 S. Main Street, **The Tea Lady** is a charming haven that gave reporter Kerry Clawson a special chance to dress up, slow down and enjoy tea, finger foods and wine during her visit with a friend.

**About Chameleon Café,** Tawney Beans writes, "The downtown Akron business's motto, 'Our menu changes to meet your needs,' certainly shines through on the menu, where nearly any dish can be made vegan, vegetarian, dairy free or gluten free." [READ MORE](#)

*United States Potato Service offers potatoes baked, fried, mashed and souped in downtown Akron,* by Megan Becka, Cleveland.com: If potatoes are your thing, United States Potato Service in downtown Akron has a russet for you.

The restaurant name is a twist on the United States Post Office, which is fitting since the restaurant is located in what used to be a post office. The restaurant opened at 209 S. Main St. in late November. "I've had United States Potato Service



in my head since 2011," owner Danny Basone told cleveland.com. "It's my take on potatoes in Akron and Devo—there are a lot of references to spuds."

Basone, who also owns the Lockview restaurant next door, calls the menu at USPS the simplest he has done.

Popular menu items include potato soup sans sans lactose, poutine fries and disco fries. The restaurant's chili fries feature Lockview's signature chili atop crispy waffle fries, according to Basone. [READ MORE](#)

*"I'd eat this multiple times a week too if I had the chance. What a freaking sandwich."—Tawney Beans on The Lockview's panko chicken sandwich.*

*10 of the best restaurants found in Ohio, from Cuyahoga Falls to Cincinnati, featuring Diamond Deli at #6,* by Grace Tucker, Akron Beacon Journal: Yelp, the ever-so-popular crowd-sourced review site, compiled its list of Top Restaurants in Ohio for February 2024, in which it used hundreds of real customer reviews culminating in average ratings out of five stars.

The 10 restaurants with the best ratings in the Buckeye State includes Diamond Deli. [READ MORE](#)

*Rubber City Comics celebrates remodeled space, relaunch, and ribbon-cutting,* by DAP Staff: On March 2, 2024, Rubber City Comics, Akron's longest running comics shop, celebrated the relaunch of their newly-renovated store at 74 E. Mill St. with a ribbon-cutting, a sale, comic artists in the shop, and new partnerships.

The store opened a satellite location, City Comics, in the Northside Marketplace—a collaboration with the Marketplace, Magic City Comics and Rubber City Comics. They also broadened their Mill St. shop offerings, partnering with Modern Traditions Co. to bring vintage clothing into the store. [FIND OUT MORE ABOUT RUBBER CITY COMICS](#)



# VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Downtown Visitors & Residents

Comparison, Year-Over-Year

	VISITS	VISITORS	EMPLOYEES	RESIDENTS
Q1 2024	1,420,000	395,000	22,200	2,600
Q1 2023	1,418,900	628,000	23,000	2,600

\*Placer.ai data from Akron-Canton Airport

## Q1 New Downtown Businesses

**Plannerz Place Eatery** • 21 Furnace St.  
[theplannerzplace.com](http://theplannerzplace.com)

## New Offices / Remodeled Spaces

**Buckeye State Credit Union**  
[buckeyeenergybrokers.com](http://buckeyeenergybrokers.com)

**State & Federal Communications**  
[stateandfed.com](http://stateandfed.com)

**Rubber City Comics**  
[rubbercitycomics.com](http://rubbercitycomics.com)



## Business Development

### Office Occupancy

	OCCUPANCY RATE	AVG ASKING RATE (PER SQ. FT.)
H2 - 2023	85.2%	\$19.69
H1 - 2023	84.7%	\$19.73
H2 - 2022	85.5%	\$18.32
H1 - 2022	85.7%	\$17.26

\*Data from CBRE



## Residential Development as of Q1 - 2024

**88%** Residential Occupancy



## Hospitality | Summit County

### HOTEL PERFORMANCE JANUARY - MARCH 2024

	OCCUPANCY	AVERAGE DAILY RATE	RevPAR†
SUMMIT COUNTY	47.3%	\$93.69	\$44.34
OHIO	49.1%	\$109.69	\$53.86
<b>HOTEL PERFORMANCE 2023</b>			
SUMMIT COUNTY	56.7%	\$103.66	\$58.73
OHIO	57.7%	\$117.43	\$67.81
<b>HOTEL PERFORMANCE 2022</b>			
SUMMIT COUNTY	59.7%	\$96.66	\$57.74
OHIO	57.7%	\$112.02	\$64.60

\*Data from Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau

†RevPAR (revenue available per room) calculated by multiplying hotel average daily room rate by occupancy rate



## DAP Business Outreach

Q1 - 2024	CONTACTS MADE*
RETAIL BUSINESS CONTACTS	<b>66</b>
NON-RETAIL BUSINESS CONTACTS	<b>27</b>
RETAIL AND BUSINESS PROSPECTS**	<b>37</b>

\* refers to the number of unique visits/contacts initiated by DAP per quarter

\*\* refers to the number of requests for DAP's assistance in locating space for business



# JANUARY – MARCH EVENTS



## 1,600 Celebrate 2024 Lunar New Year in Downtown Akron

*Feb. 22, 2024, by DAP Staff*

Lunar New Year is one of the most important celebrations of the year in East and Southeast Asian cultures. It's a time to honor ancestors and deities, to visit family and feast. It's observed in China, Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Philippines, and festivities last a full two weeks from the lunar year's first new moon to its first full moon.

Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP) has worked with community members for three years now to present a Downtown Akron Lunar New Year Celebration, with significant involvement from the National Inventors Hall of Fame STEM Middle School learners and educators. This year's festivities brought 1,600 visitors together to enjoy performances and cultural experiences to usher in the Year of the Dragon. The dragon is the fifth sign of the Chinese zodiac and is linked to good luck, long life, and wisdom, and the Year of the Dragon is generally thought to bring auspice and exciting opportunities to all.

[\*Click here to READ MORE and view additional photos.\*](#)





# DOWNTOWN PROGRAMS





# CLEAN, SAFE & WELCOMING

## DAP Ambassador Stats Jan. 1 - Mar. 31, 2024



Downtown ambassadors maintain hours of operation seven days a week through support from Akron Civic Commons.

For ambassador services or to report a problem, call the on-duty ambassador during hours of operation at 330-706-7383.

Monday - Saturday: 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. | Sunday: 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

For non-emergency issues outside of ambassador operating hours, use the Akron Police Department's non-emergency numbers, 330-375-2181 or 330-375-2101. For any emergency at any time, call 911.

[Find out more about downtown Ambassadors.](#)

“Such a beautiful program and one that I believe our city should be very proud of! Thank you so much for what you do!” —*Dani McFadden via Facebook*

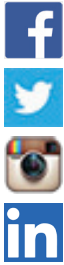
### DID YOU KNOW:

Since November 2020, Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP) and Community Support Services (CSS) have been working together to provide outreach and resources to those experiencing homelessness in downtown Akron. Through a program supported by Peg's Foundation, called Partnership for Purpose, DAP ambassadors and CSS outreach workers have focused substantial time and energy on building relationships with downtown's homeless population, with the ultimate goal of helping individuals transition into permanent housing. [Find out more.](#)



# MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

DAP shares news about downtown progress, businesses, institutions and organizations, downtown life and the downtown community in numerous ways. The most readily measurable outlets for promotion and advocacy are digital, through the DAP website, social media and email newsletter. Below are selected metrics related to these communications.



SOCIAL MEDIA	Q4 - 2023	Q1 - 2024
FACEBOOK	16,076	16,548*
TWITTER	9,412	9,381
INSTAGRAM	8,398	9,285
LINKEDIN	2,638	2,836

WEBSITE TRAFFIC	Q4 - 2023	Q1 - 2024
USERS	84,112	87,975
SESSIONS	109,963	111,932
UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS	187,794	198,590

EMAIL NEWSLETTER	Q1 - 2024
NUMBER PUBLISHED	24
SENDS	201,045
OPENS	64,009
CLICKS	5,736
SUBSCRIBERS	19,464

\*In Q1 2024 we switched from tracking Facebook page likes to page followers.

Stay connected to the latest information on downtown Akron, subscribe to Do Downtown, our weekly email newsletter at [downtownakron.com/news/subscribe](https://downtownakron.com/news/subscribe), and follow us on social media @DowntownAkronPartnership.



## NEW Downtown Guides & Stories

We'll do the planning, you make the memories. DAP's growing list of downtown Guides can help you make a day of it in downtown Akron. *(click each to read)*

### Guides

- [11 Breakfast & Brunch Restaurants in Downtown Akron \(updated\)](#)
- [35 Black-Owned Businesses in Downtown Akron \(updated\)](#)
- [24 Casual Restaurants in Downtown Akron \(updated\)](#)
- [Spend a Saturday in Downtown Akron for \\$20 or Less \(NEW!\)](#)
- [13 Downtown Akron Must-Dos \(updated\)](#)
- [19 Downtown Akron Underground Must-Dos \(NEW!\)](#)



- [47 Women-Owned Businesses in Downtown Akron \(updated\)](#)
- [Your Guide to Experiencing the 2024 Total Solar Eclipse in Downtown Akron \(NEW!\)](#)

### Stories

- [Downtown Akron Partnership & Community Support Services Expand Partnership with Dedicated Downtown Homeless Outreach Worker](#)
- [1,600 Community Members Celebrate 2024 Lunar New Year in Downtown Akron](#)
- [10 Questions with a Downtown Akron Resident: Benjamin McMillan](#)

## NEW Feature: 10 Questions with a Downtown Akron Resident. Meet Ben McMillan

Would you like to be featured in an upcoming edition of 10 Questions with a Downtown Akron Resident? Contact us at [info@downtownakron.com](mailto:info@downtownakron.com)





# NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## Tony Troppe details \$52M redevelopment of Akron's old Beacon Journal building

Akron developer Tony Troppe says he's going to turn the former Akron Beacon Journal building and an adjacent parcel into a mixed-use development consisting of nearly 200 residential units, food purveyors and other businesses.

In December, Troppe won \$5.3 million in state tax credits for the project, which the state says will have a total cost of \$52.2 million, based on Troppe's application for the credits. Troppe said he has negotiated the purchase of the property from Alabama's Capstone Development and is in the process of closing the transaction.—*Dan Shingler, Crain's Cleveland Business, Jan. 10, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## Welty moving ahead with \$31M residential development in downtown

If at first you don't succeed, try—and apply—again.

That's often a tactic when working with tax credits, and the developer behind a \$31 million residential development project planned for downtown Akron said he'll reapply for historic tax credits for the project, after losing out in the recent round of state awards.

"If you believe in downtown, you want to keep investing in downtown," said Don Taylor, CEO of Welty Building Co., who hopes to redevelop Akron's CityCentre building into 117 new apartments.

The building, as it's now being redesigned, would have more than 100 one-bedroom and studio apartments, with a "handful" of two-bedroom units, Taylor said. Rents are expected to be between \$1,300 and \$1,500 a month. —*Dan Shingler, Crain's Cleveland Business, Jan. 18, 2024*

[Click here for the full story.](#)



## Summit Metro Parks buys downtown property for central maintenance facility

Summit MetroParks plans to house its central maintenance operations on land that it recently purchased off of Broadway Street in downtown Akron.

Purchased for \$3.1 million, the 4.5 acres of property comprises two buildings totaling 44,000 square feet, currently addressed 505 and 465 S. Broadway St.

The Metro Parks aims to begin operating in the larger building, 505 S. Broadway St., later this year, said Claire Merrick, marketing and public relations manager.—*Patrick Williams, Akron Beacon Journal, Jan. 20, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)





# NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Mayor Malik Announces Akron Selected For Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities

Akron Mayor Shamas Malik announced Akron was selected by Bloomberg Philanthropies as one of 25 U.S. cities to join Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities.

Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities is a three-year initiative designed to leverage historic levels of federal funding to incubate and implement transformative local solutions to build low-carbon, resilient, and economically thriving communities. Building on the longtime leadership of U.S. cities to confront the overlapping crises of climate change and racial wealth inequity, the \$200 million Bloomberg Philanthropies initiative will provide deep support to selected cities to pursue transformative solutions through partnerships with PolicyLink, Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins University, and the Natural Resources Defense Council.—*City of Akron Press Release, Mar. 12, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## Akron group seeks up to \$70M in federal funds to boost polymer industry growth

Akron's Polymer Industry Cluster is vying for up to \$70M in federal funds, with the aim to keep or add 6,300 industry jobs and bring in \$1.8 billion in direct private investment.

On Thursday, the cluster sent a funding proposal to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Innovation Hubs Program (Tech Hubs).

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, and a bipartisan group of U.S. House members from the region sent EDA a letter of support for funding.—*Patrick Williams, Akron Beacon Journal, Mar. 2, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## Helping teachers teach kids to read: UA lands \$995K grant for literacy center

The University of Akron announced it has received a \$950,000 grant to establish a Center for Structured Literacy.

"The (center's) core mission will be the translation of scientific research on reading instruction, intervention and dyslexia for educators," UA said in a statement. "It will also provide professional development to help pre- and in-service K-12 teachers throughout the state understand the science of reading, structured literacy and dyslexia, identify its characteristics and provide appropriate instruction and intervention."—*Amanda Garrett, Akron Beacon Journal, Jan. 5, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)



## DOWNTOWN AKRON COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SITE SEARCH

Looking for office or storefront commercial space? Downtown Akron Partnership can help you search for available locations within our 42-block Special Improvement District and arrange for tours. This is a free and confidential Site Selection service provided by our organization. [Click here to try it!](#)

Visit [downtownakron.com/do-business](http://downtownakron.com/do-business) to view the ways in which DAP can help you relocate or start your business in downtown.

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The DAP website highlights available job opportunities within the Special Improvement District. [Click here to visit the page.](#)

TO UPDATE YOUR COMPANY PROFILE,  
PROVIDE A PHOTO  
OR TO LIST A JOB OPENING,  
PLEASE EMAIL [INFO@DOWNTOWNAKRON.COM](mailto:INFO@DOWNTOWNAKRON.COM).



# NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**CHAKAIA BOOKER**  
2024 VIA ART FUND:  
ARTIST PRODUCTION GRANT

## Curated Storefront wins \$100,000 grant for Lock 3 sculpture by Chakaia Booker

Akron's Curated Storefront has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from VIA Art Fund of New York for a commission by American sculptor Chakaia Booker to be installed in Lock 3 Park as part of its redevelopment project.

"I don't believe there's any other Akron organizations that have had a grant from VIA Art. They're pretty selective," said Rick Rogers, executive director of Curated Storefront, a small nonprofit that transforms downtown Akron spaces with art installations. "I think that as long as we build a strong relationship, we hope to have them as a regular funder."—*Kerry Clawson, Akron Beacon Journal, Jan. 20, 2024*

[Click here to read the whole story.](#)



## How the Development Finance Authority helps Greater Akron

What do the Amazon distribution center in Akron, the Hall of Fame Village project in Canton and the Akron Civic Theatre have in common?

All are among the hundreds of projects across Northeast Ohio that have secured financing through the Development Finance Authority of Summit County.

The authority and organizations that it staffs and manages have provided more than \$882 million in financing for 341 projects in Ohio since 2000.—*Patrick Williams, Akron Beacon Journal, Feb. 20, 2024.*

[Click here to read the whole story..](#)



Akron Bazaar new event space,  
Akron, Ohio.

## Akron Bazaar Plans 10 Markets in downtown Akron in 2024

Last November's first Akron Bazaar went so well that founder Shannon Okey is planning to make the long-running Cleveland indie craft show a permanent fixture here.

The two-day market featured 100 vendors and took place at Bounce Innovation Hub and the now-shuttered R. Shea Brewing at Canal Place. Okey said the event went "surprisingly well for as little time as we had to prepare."

Akron Bazaar will host 10 markets this year at 159 S. Main St. in downtown. Many of the Akron Bazaar markets coincide with popular downtown events, such as Akron Pride Festival, Summit Artspace's ArtWalk and the Welcome Santa Parade. (Here's the complete [2024 Akron Bazaar schedule.](#))—*Brittany Moseley, Signal Akron, Apr. 4, 2024*

[Click here to read the whole story.](#)



# NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## GPD Group Expands Services with Acquisition of M.A.N. Mapping Services

GPD Group is pleased to announce that M.A.N. Mapping Services, Inc., a leading aerial mapping firm based in Hilliard, Ohio, has joined our team.

M.A.N. Mapping Services has nearly 40 years of experience and is synonymous with providing high-quality geospatial services in Ohio and the surrounding states. Their service offerings include digital photographic lab services, aerotriangulation, orthophotographic imagery, and topographic mapping.—*GPD Group News Release, Jan. 9, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## Lock 3 Park Updates #3 and 4

During the 1st quarter 2024, Akron Civic Commons released two hard hat video updates from Dan Rice, president and CEO of The Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, and Kathryn DeMuesy, senior construction manager, at Anser Advisory regarding the progressing construction for the Akron Civic Commons 2.0 Lock 3 Park Project. More video updates are planned as the park progresses toward reopening in fall 2024.

[View Update #3, January 30, 2024](#)

[View Update #4, March 21, 2024](#)

## Akron Bicentennial Commission Establishes Akron200 and Hires Executive Director

The Akron Bicentennial Commission and Mayor Shammias Malik announced that the Commission is forming a not-for-profit corporation, 'Akron200 Inc.,' in order to receive funds and distribute grants to neighborhood groups that are planning celebrations as part of Akron's Bicentennial. After consultation with the Mayor, the Commission has appointed Mark Greer as Executive Director to implement plans for the city's 200th anniversary.—*Akron Bicentennial Commission News Release, Jan. 3, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## A neighborhood rebirth? Activist eyes option for decommissioned section of Akron Innerbelt

It might take several years, but if you ask activist and Akron city contractor Liz Ogbu, the decommissioned part of the Akron Innerbelt could once again become a blend of residential, commercial and green spaces.

The Akron city government began moving residents out of a vibrant, majority Black neighborhood in the 1960s before razing the land in the 1970s to make way for the Innerbelt.



## MARK GREER

has been appointed the  
Akron200 Executive Director



“The Commission began as a city-sponsored body, and these new steps, to create a non-profit entity led by Mark Greer, will help ensure the success of our Bicentennial,” says Akron Mayor Shammias Malik. “Mark is a dynamic leader and creative thinker, and I am excited to see what’s ahead.”





# NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The city hired Ogbu, a designer and spatial justice activist, in 2020 to seek community feedback and help determine development possibilities for the 30 acres that now lie as unused, recessed roadway.—*Patrick Williams, Akron Beacon Journal, Mar. 19, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## Pritt Entertainment Group (PEG) Provides Extensive Graphics for NHL's Winter Classic

PEG, located in downtown Akron, recently worked with the National Hockey League (NHL) on a graphics and animation package for the 2024 Discover NHL Winter Classic. The annual event, which takes place on Jan. 1, was held this year in Seattle, Washington. The PEG Team created 400+ deliverables for the boards at T-Mobile Park including match-ups, logo animations, sponsor elements, fan interactions and more. James Miller from PEG was on-site in Seattle before the game and during the event. It was one of PEG's most high-profile projects to date and an incredible opportunity for the whole team.

[Click here to view some of the highlights.](#)

## Akron area became home to more than 500 new refugees in 2023, International Institute says

The Akron area continues to provide new hope and opportunity for hundreds of people leaving behind violent conflict or dire circumstances across the globe.

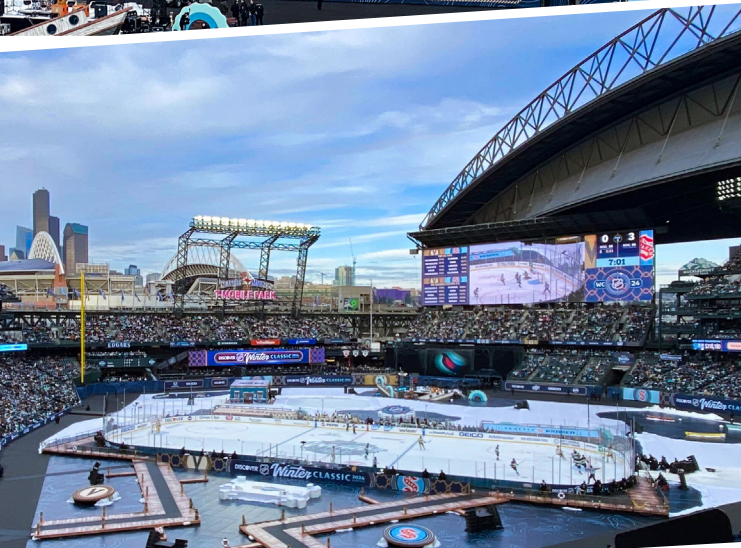
The International Institute of Akron says it resettled 518 new refugees in 2023, with the largest segments coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Sudan. Hundreds more received assistance through the nonprofit's immigration legal services, employment resources, extended social services, education and interpreting and translation.

The organization has been a crucial hub of support as the Nepali and Bhutanese refugee community has flourished—particularly in Akron's North Hill and surrounding neighborhoods—in recent years.—*April Helms, Akron Beacon Journal, Jan. 17, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## Ohio House Approves \$2.5M for City of Akron

In February, the Ohio House of Representatives voted 75-19 in favor of House Bill 2 which earmarks \$350M from the state's pandemic fund. This funding includes \$2.5M to the City of Akron to support the redevelopment of Cascade Plaza through repairs to the Cascade parking





# NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

structure which sits beneath four tower buildings on the downtown plaza.

Akron's application was supported by a number of community stakeholders, including the University of Akron, Akron Energy Systems, the County of Summit, Huntington Bank, Akron Children's Hospital, Testa Companies, Downtown Akron Partnership, OKSK, LLC, Akron RubberDucks, the Greater Akron Chamber, Summa Hospital, the Akron Art Museum, PNC Bank, Development Finance Authority, Summa Hospital, and Akron/Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The House also allocated funding for a number of other local institutions, including the University of Akron's Polsky redevelopment, the Akron Zoo, Akron-Canton Airport, Akron Art Museum, Akron Community Health Center, and Child Guidance and Family Solutions.—*City of Akron Press Release, Feb. 8, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## The 8th Annual Summit Brew Path Launches

The Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau (ASCVB) is excited to announce the eighth annual Summit Brew Path [which launched Feb. 10, 2024]. The Brew Path consists of 21 locations throughout Summit County and provides an opportunity to showcase and support our local breweries.

Participants are encouraged to head to breweries that they may not be familiar with or to try a new craft beer at their favorite spot. The journey begins by picking up a passport at any brewery along the Brew Path. Users need to visit and make a purchase at each location to receive a stamp on their passport. The minimum number of stamps needed for completion is 17, but the potential for larger prizes comes from visiting all 21 breweries. Participants must be 21 years of age or older.—*Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau Press Release, Feb. 7, 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)

## Sojourner Truth Legacy Plaza featured in Smithsonian Magazine's "Remarkable Untold Story of Sojourner Truth"

The plaza is taking shape and is scheduled to open in May. The word TRUTH adorns a stone wall, and pillars showcase a sketch of the old church and quotes from Truth. (The phrase "Ar'n't I a woman?" won't make an appearance.) Another pillar will list the names of Black women leaders in Akron's history. Every student in the Summit County school system will visit the site.—*Cynthia Greenlee, Smithsonian Magazine, Mar. 2024*

[Click here to read the full story.](#)





# NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## Akron Civic Theatre Generates \$20M Annually in Economic Activity

Akron Civic Theatre's recently completed economic impact report, created by Dr. Shawn Rohlin, Department of Economics, Kent State University and Dr. Amanda Weinstein, Department of Economics, University of Akron, indicates the theater generates \$20M+ annually in economic activity, and "perhaps more importantly, strengthen[s] the case for employee recruitment and retention in our increasingly place-based employment economy."

Key findings from the study include:

- The Akron Civic Theatre is a major driver of employment. Its recent \$9M capital campaign supporting building restoration and expansion had a construction impact creating 84 jobs and generating \$13.5M in economic activity and \$1.3M in local, State and Federal taxes.
- The Civic's annual programming and operations support 107 jobs driving \$13M in economic activity and \$1M+ in local, State and Federal taxes.
- Patrons attending events at the Akron Civic Theatre support an additional 425 jobs, \$18M in wages, and \$4.2M in local, State and Federal taxes.
- Over the next 5 years, the report estimates that the civic will create or support more than 2,500 jobs in the local area, increasing residents' incomes by more the \$112M, with a total spending impact of \$197M
- For every 10 jobs directly created or supported by the civic, an additional 4 jobs are likely to be created or supported in other industries.
- Within 30 years, the civic's economic impact will grow to over 9,700 jobs and \$735M in total spending.

The Akron Civic Theatre enhances the quality of life in Akron and Summit County at a time when our economy is increasingly driven by the ability to work from anywhere, making community amenities a priority to attract and retain a quality workforce.





# BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

## ARTSNOW AWARDS \$19,000 IN GRANTS TO LOCALS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ArtsNow announced 15 Summit County artists and creatives as grant recipients for the 2023 Summit County Creative Investment Program, with grants totaling \$19,517.

“We are thrilled to award more than double the number of investments from last year,” Nicole Mullet, executive director of ArtsNow, said in a statement. “We take pride in offering these talented individuals the support they deserve to continue the thriving arts and culture in our community.” [Find out more.](#)

## SUMMIT COUNTY EXECUTIVE ILENE SHAPIRO IS NSME AKRON-CANTON EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

National Sales & Marketing Executives (NSME) of Akron-Canton named Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro the 2024 Executive of the Year. Ilene Shapiro is serving her second term as Summit County Executive. As Executive, she leads ten unique departments and serves as the chief fiduciary officer for the county, managing a budget of over a half billion dollars. In holding this office, Executive Shapiro strives to make a positive impact on the lives of all Summit County residents. She is the first woman in Ohio to serve as county executive. [Find out more.](#)

## KEMP BOYD IS NSME AKRON-CANTON'S 2024 OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADER

National Sales & Marketing Executives (NSME) of Akron-Canton named Executive Director of Love Akron the 2024 Outstanding Community Leader. Boyd brings a wealth of leadership experience to his role, embodying a relentless commitment to motivating others and empowering those around him to reach their full potential. Kemp is a firm believer that relationships are our greatest intervention and whether it's within the church, on the football field, or across Greater Akron, he strives to inspire individuals to be change-makers and make a collective impact. [Find out more.](#)

## DOWNTOWN AKRON PARTNERSHIP NAMES KIMBERLY BECKETT AS INTERIM PRESIDENT

Downtown Akron Partnership has elevated longtime staff member Kimberly Beckett to vice president, and she will serve as interim president of the organization while the board searches for a permanent replacement.

Beckett was promoted after Suzie Graham, who served as DAP's president and CEO for 12 years, announced her departure earlier this month to become Akron's director of economic development under new Mayor Shammias Malik.

“Kimberly Beckett is an accomplished, proven leader who is deeply connected to the downtown community,” said DAP Board President Julie Wesel. “Along with her dedicated team, she will provide DAP with continuity and maintain the level of excellence in serving the neighborhood through this transition.” [Find out more.](#)





# BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS



## CITY OF AKRON DIRECTOR OF DEI ESTHER THOMAS RECEIVES HAROLD K. STUBBS HUMANITARIAN AWARD

City of Akron Director of DEI Esther Thomas was recognized with a Harold K. Stubbs Humanitarian Award, in honor of Thomas for her work in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Harold K. Stubbs Humanitarian Award, sponsored by the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church of Akron, recognizes those who have made contributions in areas such as social action, government, business, medicine and law.

"It is humbling to have my professional work recognized through this award," said Director Thomas. "I am thankful and will continue to serve our community with love and joy. [Find out more.](#)

## UNIVERSITY OF AKRON JAZZED TO BRING LOCAL GUITARIST DAN WILSON ONTO PROGRAM FACULTY

The latest active musician to join the teaching roster is jazz guitarist Dan Wilson, who tours regularly and earned a Grammy nomination working with jazz great Joey DeFrancesco.

The Bath Township native and Revere High School graduate was recruited by friends and fellow musicians Chris Coles and Theron Brown, full-time professors who've been revamping UA's jazz program since fall 2022. [Find out more.](#)



## AKRON-SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY MARKS MAJOR MILESTONE

The Akron Public Library first opened its doors on March 1, 1874. To celebrate its 150th anniversary, the library's main location downtown and 18 branches plan to host various events throughout 2024, including author meetups and talks, library history overviews and a "Grand Gala." It also plans on introducing some new program initiatives throughout the year. [Find out more.](#)

## STATE & FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS CEO ELIZABETH BARTZ RECEIVES HAROLD K. STUBBS HUMANITARIAN AWARD

State & Federal Communications President and CEO Elizabeth Bartz accepted the Harold K. Stubbs Humanitarian Award for Distinguished Service in the Field of Business on March 15, 2024.

The announcement came via State & Federal Communication's Facebook page, which also stated, "It was such an honor to be recognized for Elizabeth's and State and Federal Communications, Inc.'s contributions and dedication to our community!"





# BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

## JUDGE NICOLE WALKER, GRANTS COORDINATOR NICOLE HAGY TO BE HONORED AS “WOMEN OF DISTINCTION”

Akron Municipal Court Judge Nicole Walker and Akron Municipal Court Community Outreach and Grants Coordinator Nicole Hagy will be receiving “Women of Distinction” honors this May from the Girl Scouts of North East Ohio.

The 13th Annual Women of Distinction Awards Luncheon, hosted by the Girl Scouts of North East Ohio, recognizes women in the region who go above and beyond to make our communities better places to live and work. [Find out more.](#)

## AKRON RUBBERDUCKS MANAGER ROUGLAS ODOR NAMED CLEVELAND GUARDIANS THIRD BASE COACH

Rouglas Odor has been in the Cleveland organization for over 35 years as a player, coach, manager or coordinator.

Now Odor is getting his shot in Major League Baseball as the new third base coach and infield coach for the Cleveland Guardians.

“I went through the interview process, and I remember I was getting groceries when Stephen [Vogt] called me and said the good news,” Odor said. “It’s an honor and a privilege to be a part of the big-league club and I am very excited.” [Find out more.](#)

## UNIVERSITY OF AKRON ZIPS MEN’S BASKETBALL WINS THE MAC TOURNAMENT, FALL IN NCAA TOURNAMENT

Eight seconds.

It’s the amount of time University of Akron coach John Groce paused before he answered a question about how difficult it had been to remove honorable mention All-America forward Enrique Freeman with 1:23 left to play Thursday afternoon at PPG Paints Arena.

When Groce substituted out Freeman, senior guard Greg Tribble Jr. and senior forward Sammy Hunter late during 14th-seeded Akron’s 77-60 loss to No. 3 Creighton in a Midwest Region first-round NCAA Tournament game, it signaled the end of an era for Zips men’s basketball. [Find out more.](#)

## ZIPPY IS #1, RANKED BY SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

The NCAA men’s tournament is the domain of mascots.

That’s right. At no point in American sports do so many mascots get so much airtime in such a short window. If you enjoy anthropomorphic hijinks, this is your month.

With this in mind, let’s rank this March’s constituent critters on a scale of off-putting to awesome—with scattered commentary where appropriate. [Find out more.](#)





# TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT

## FEATURED PROPERTY

**The Exchange Building**  
12 E. Exchange St.



250 - 7,300 SF of Space available just feet from the nexus of downtown Akron, the intersection of S. Main and E. Exchange Streets.

### Highlights

- Free surface parking for customers/clients in a gated lot
- Elevator modernized in 2021
- Central HVAC

- Separate metered utilities
- Close proximity to Lock 3 Park, Akron Civic Theatre, Canal Park Stadium, the Towpath Trail, Akron Art Museum, and many retail, restaurant and entertainment venues
- Walk Score® rated “Very Walkable” (83)
- Bike Score® rated “Very Bikeable” (72)

For more information, contact Kimberly Beckett  
330-374-7676 | [kbeckett@downtownakron.com](mailto:kbeckett@downtownakron.com)

## FEATURED BUSINESS

### State & Federal Communications



State and Federal Communications, Inc. is a political compliance consulting firm and online guidebook service covering lobbying, campaign finance, and procurement lobbying compliance laws for the federal government,

all 50 states, more than 300 local jurisdictions, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Latin America. For 30 years, State and Federal Communications, Inc., has been committed to providing their expertise to more than 2,600 clients from Fortune 500 companies, law firms, government affairs firms, trade associations, and non-profits all over the world.

## METRO RTA ANNOUNCES NEW LEGAL AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS OFFICER POSITION, WELCOMES GERT WILMS

METRO RTA announces Gert Wilms as its new Legal and Government Affairs Officer. In this key role, Gert Wilms will oversee legal and government affairs matters, providing strategic guidance and support for our compliance with local and federal regulations, as well as assist with the development and implementation of public policies and programs to help local communities and generate support for the strategic goals of METRO.



“We are excited to welcome Gert Wilms to our team,” said CEO Dawn Distler. “With our continued efforts to develop and enhance public transportation throughout our region, Gert’s exceptional abilities and leadership will play a vital role in keeping our community thriving and moving forward.” [Find out more.](#)

## AKRON RTA’S TRANSIT CENTER RIDERS ARE ‘CHECKING OUT’ LIBRARY ON THE GO

Bus riders at the downtown transit center are now able to check out books, movies and digital resources such as e-books and audiobooks as part of a collaboration between the Akron-Summit County Public Library and METRO RTA.

The Library On the Go program, housed in a blue vending machine-style locker inside the facility at 631 S. Broadway St., was made possible by \$62,535 in federal funding distributed by the State Library of Ohio’s American Rescue Plan Act 2021 Outreach Grant. [Find out more.](#)





# ICYMI: (IN CASE YOU MISSED IT)

## Malik taps Downtown Akron Partnership president for economic development role

Days before his public inauguration and community celebration, Akron Mayor Shammus Malik announced further key appointments to his administration.

On Thursday, he announced that Downtown Akron Partnership President Suzie Graham Moore is coming aboard as director of economic development. Sean Vollman will retain his post as deputy director of economic development.

“Economic development and planning will be key to my administration’s goals, and I’m confident in the team we are assembling,” Malik said. [Find out more.](#)

## City of Akron, ADM Board, and Portage Path Behavioral Health Launch Summit County Outreach Team (SCOUT)

The City of Akron, Summit County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board (ADM Board), and Portage Path Behavioral Health announced the launch of a pilot program for the Summit County Outreach Team (SCOUT). The program is a co-responder model in which crisis-trained members of Akron Fire, Akron Police, and Portage Path Behavioral Health will jointly respond to low acuity calls for service where mental health is a concern, but the individual is not a danger to themselves or others. [Find out more.](#)

## Photo gallery: Akron Mayor Malik ceremonially sworn in at E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall

The city’s 63rd mayor is also its youngest, first person of color to serve. [Find out more and view the Signal Akron photo gallery.](#)

## Shammus Malik wraps up first month as Akron mayor with community development on his mind

Akron needs to make its downtown a more livable place while also working to assist other areas of the city struggling to attract development, Mayor Shammus Malik told an Akron Roundtable audience Tuesday as his first month in office wound down.

Nearly 600 people filled the Goodyear Room at the John S. Knight Center for a Roundtable Signature Series luncheon conversation moderated by Andrew Meyer of Ideastream. Malik answered questions on a range of topics, including the search for a new police chief, the proposed sale of Summa Health to HATCo and whether a recently introduced update on if Akron’s logo would be sticking around. [Find Out More.](#)





# WELLNESS on the PLAZA

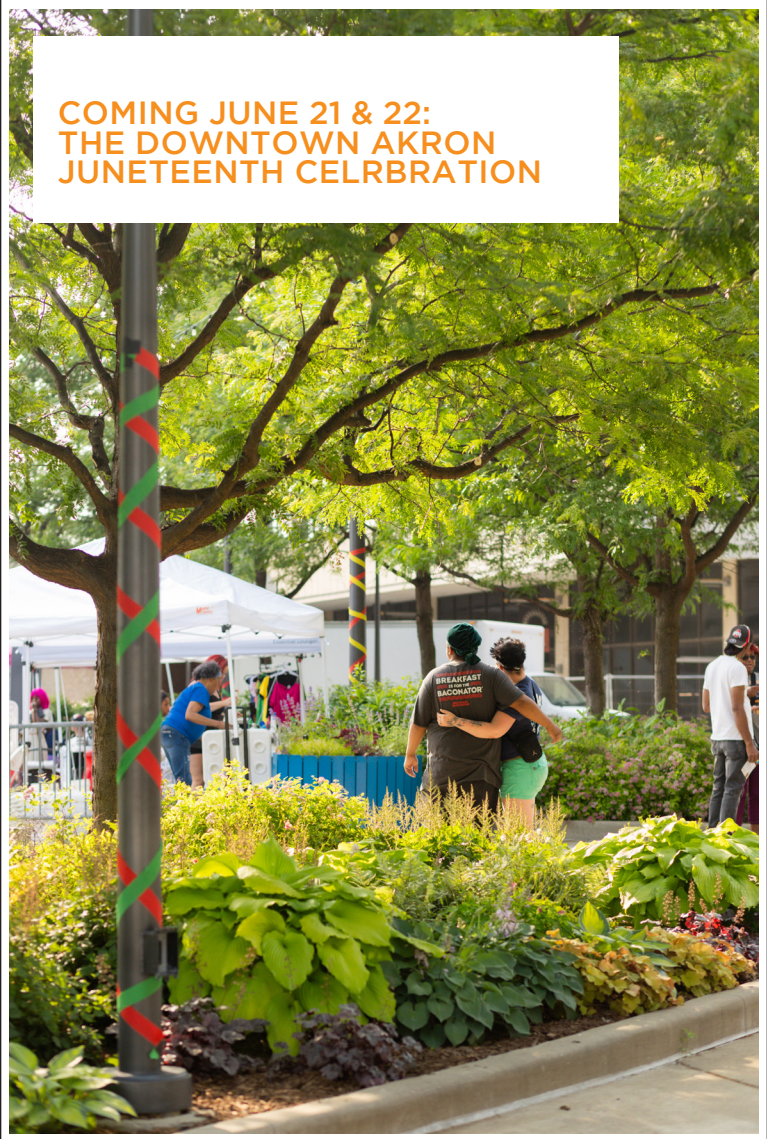
COMING MAY 2024

YOGA  
ZUMBA  
KICKBOXING  
LINE DANCING  
BOOT CAMP  
PILATES

ROLLER SKATING  
HAPPY HOUR  
LIVE & LOCAL MUSIC  
CHESS & GAMES

FIND OUT MORE & RESERVE TICKETS

presented by



## SAVE THE DATE(S):

**MAY 26 - SEPT. 5, 2024**  
Wellness on the Plaza

Yoga, Hip-Hop Step, Kickboxing, Zumba, Pilates, Bootcamp, Line Dancing, & Pop-Up Wellness classes will be available, for free, every week.

Plus: Skate Nights on the Plaza, Happy Hour on the Plaza, & more.

**JUNE 21 & 22, 2024**  
Downtown Akron Juneteenth Celebrations

Friday, June 21: Mix & Mingle  
Saturday, June 22: Saturday Celebration

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[www.downtownakron.com](http://www.downtownakron.com)

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#Downtownakron



Projecto Raíces Presents  
**4TH ANNUAL AKRON LATIN FESTIVAL**

Saturday, September 14 | 3 - 9 pm  
Cascade Plaza | 122 S. Main St.  
FOOD, MUSIC, DANCE, and MORE

**FALL FEST**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 | 5 - 9 PM  
5 - 7 PM

20 Trick-or-Treat Stations on Main St.  
Music, Food, Pumpkin Decorating on Cascade Plaza  
7:30 PM

Free Outdoor Screening of Hocus Pocus on Cascade Plaza

Smells Like Snow  
Coffee Festival  
Downtown Akron

CASCADE PLAZA  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2  
12:00 - 6:00 p.m.

COFFEE, FOOD TRUCKS  
GLAMOUR GIRLS-INSPIRED FUN  
LIVE MUSIC, PHOTO STATIONS  
SPECIAL GUEST

