

DOWNTOWN AKRON QUARTERLY UPDATE

TOPPING OF THE MAYNARD PAVILION IN LOCK 3 PARK



KELLEY

KELLEY CRANE RENTALS
440-232-9500



2ND QUARTER 2024

DOWNTOWN AKRON SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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Save the Date: En Blanc Experience, Akron Latin Festival



8,000:
VISITORS TO THE 2024
DOWNTOWN AKRON
SAKURA FESTIVAL, pg 6



DOWNTOWN AKRON, 2ND QUARTER 2024

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



6:
**NEW DOWNTOWN
GUIDES & STORIES,**
pg 9



4,665:
**LBS OF TRASH
REMOVED BY
DOWNTOWN
AMBASSADORS IN
Q2 2024**
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**"IT'S, LIKE, ON
THE EDGE OF
BECOMING
SOMETHING
AWESOME."**
—JENNIFER COUCH,
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YOUR DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORS

Downtown Small Businesses and Storefronts in the News

Plannerz Place Eatery opened in Summit County in March, by Kerry Clawson, Tawney Beans, Akron Beacon Journal: Soul food has found a home in Akron's Northside Marketplace—a space where businesses can rent kitchens, booths and shelf space for their products—by way of The Plannerz Place Eatery.

The new restaurant celebrated its grand opening March 28-30. It offers a rotating menu with southern staples, including fried chicken wings, hoppin' johns, candied yams and collard greens.

"Our food is made fresh, cooked fresh, made with a lot of love [and] good seasonings," said [owner, Tonya] Essick. Those good seasonings do include the Mama T's Seasonings & Spices displayed on a tall rack to the left of the ordering window for customers to peruse while waiting for their food. [READ MORE](#)

Akron's Nightlight Cinema brings arthouse films and community to the city's arts district, by Malcolm X. Abram, Cleveland.com: In Downtown Akron's historic Arts District sits an unassuming storefront that houses a not-so-hidden gem that has become a staple of the Rubber City's arts scene. The Nightlight Cinema at 30 N. High St, is currently a cozy 42-person single-screen movie arthouse that shows an impressive and carefully curated array of high falutin' arthouse films, future Oscar nominees and film festival winners, along with the occasional fun retro flick to tickle moviegoers' nostalgia bones. [READ MORE](#)

"I think there's a wonderful balance and I think we're able to speak to a lot of different audiences."

New Progressive Community Initiatives offers accessible mental health, behavioral counseling in downtown Akron, by Megan Becka, Cleveland.com: The business, owned



by lifelong Akron resident Darletta Turner, offers mental health and behavioral health counseling for individuals and families and counseling education for providers at 7 N. Main St.

Turner accepts patients with private insurance as well as those who have Medicare and Medicaid, she said.

"Mental health services need to be available and accessible to everyone in the community."

Part of Turner's commitment to ensuring more people have access to mental health services includes offering education and supervision for new counselors, who are required to work under a counselor supervisor for 1.5-2 years, she said. She is hoping to develop relationships with local universities to help new counselors. [READ MORE](#)

Local history: What the shell? Unusual items are on display at the Peanut Shoppe in Akron, by Mark J. Price, Akron Beacon Journal: No matter how many times you visit, there's something different to see.

The Peanut Shoppe at 203 S. Main St. in downtown Akron is well known for its candies, nuts, chocolates and other treats, but it also serves as a museum of pop culture.

Just look at those walls. Practically every square foot is plastered with colorful memorabilia.

Hundreds of items. Perhaps thousands.

Some of Klein's favorite memorabilia involves the All-American Soap Box Derby in Akron. "We were always in the derby parades when we were young," she said.

In honor of the store's 90th anniversary, owner Marge Klein led us on a nooks-and-crannies tour of unusual artifacts on display. We were surprised to see so many things we hadn't noticed before. [READ MORE](#)



VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Downtown Visitors & Residents

Comparison, Year-Over-Year

	VISITS	VISITORS	EMPLOYEES	RESIDENTS
Q2 2024	1,594,700	800,500	24,900	2,600
Q1 2024	1,420,000	395,000	22,200	2,600

*Placer.ai data from Akron-Canton Airport

Q2 New Downtown Businesses

Café Arnone | 172 S. Broadway
cafearnone.com

Vaughnti's Luxury MensWear | 380 S. Main St.

Progressive Community Initiatives | 7 N. Main St.
progressivecommunitybh.org

159 Events on Main | 159 S. Main St.
159eventsonmain.com

WAOH Television | 526 S. Main St. Ste 124
waohtv.com

Drive-Thru Weddings and Notary, LLC
1 S. Main St. in Blu-Tique Hotel
bluemicroevents.com

Narrow Path Investigations | 388 S. Main St. Ste 411
narrowpathinvestigations.com

Buckeye Law Group | 388 S. Main St. Ste 400
buckeyeaccidentattorneys.com



Business Development

Office Occupancy

	OCCUPANCY RATE	AVG ASKING RATE (PER SQ. FT.)
H1 - 2024	85.9%	\$20.11
H2 - 2023	85.2%	\$19.69
H1 - 2023	84.7%	\$19.73
H2 - 2022	85.5%	\$18.32

*Data from CBRE



Residential Development as of Q2 - 2024

88% Residential Occupancy



Hospitality | Summit County

HOTEL PERFORMANCE APRIL - JUNE 2024

	OCCUPANCY	AVERAGE DAILY RATE	RevPAR†
SUMMIT COUNTY	52.4%	\$100.66	\$52.85
OHIO	54.5%	\$166.99	\$63.79

HOTEL PERFORMANCE JANUARY - MARCH 2024

SUMMIT COUNTY	47.3%	\$93.69	\$44.34
OHIO	49.1%	\$109.69	\$53.86

HOTEL PERFORMANCE 2023

SUMMIT COUNTY	56.7%	\$103.66	\$58.73
OHIO	57.7%	\$117.43	\$67.81

*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

Q2 - 2024	CONTACTS MADE*
RETAIL BUSINESS CONTACTS	74
NON-RETAIL BUSINESS CONTACTS	27
RETAIL AND BUSINESS PROSPECTS**	11

* 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

APRIL – JUNE EVENTS



2024 Downtown Akron Sakura Festival Welcomes 8K Amid Blossoming Trees

Apr. 10, 2024, by DAP Staff

This year, luck was our friend, and the more than 450 cherry blossom trees that line the Towpath Trail through downtown Akron and Ohio & Erie Canal Park were plush with the most delicate, sweetly scented blush florets. It was an idyllic backdrop for visitors to enjoy performances, free crafts and activities, sakura-flavored sweets and beverages, and cool sunshine that lit the city on Saturday, April 6.

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



Inaugural Downtown Akron South Asian Celebration on Cascade Plaza

May 1, 2024, by DAP Staff

On Sunday, April 28, 2024, Downtown Akron Partnership presented the inaugural Downtown Akron South Asian Celebration, a casual afternoon event that welcomed an estimated 300 people to Cascade Plaza to enjoy food, performances, activities, and vendors. The weather was warm and breezy, with just a bit of rain—ideal conditions for the Holi celebration that took place on part of the plaza.

As with all cultural events presented by DAP, the South Asian Celebration was planned by a committee of individuals with backgrounds in or connections to the community in question—in this case the South Asian community, primarily Sonal Jain, Kalanithi Kanapathy-Bagley, and Karuna Geletka. Abigail Ernst, who works with The University of Akron's Zips Activity Board, also played an integral role in engaging university students with the festivities.

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



2024 Downtown Akron Juneteenth Celebration Welcomes Modest Crowd & Plenty of Food to Cascade Plaza

June 25, 2024, by DAP Staff

The 2024 Downtown Akron Juneteenth Celebration weekend went ahead as scheduled on June 21 and June 22, despite the cancellation of events on city property the weekend prior. The turnout was modest—perhaps 400 people over the course of both days, not including the crowd that sat on the lawn at the Lock 3 Back Yard to groove to a performance by the acclaimed Dirty Dozen Brass Band after the Saturday celebration. Nevertheless, it was a relaxed, joyful weekend, which we hope to build upon next year.

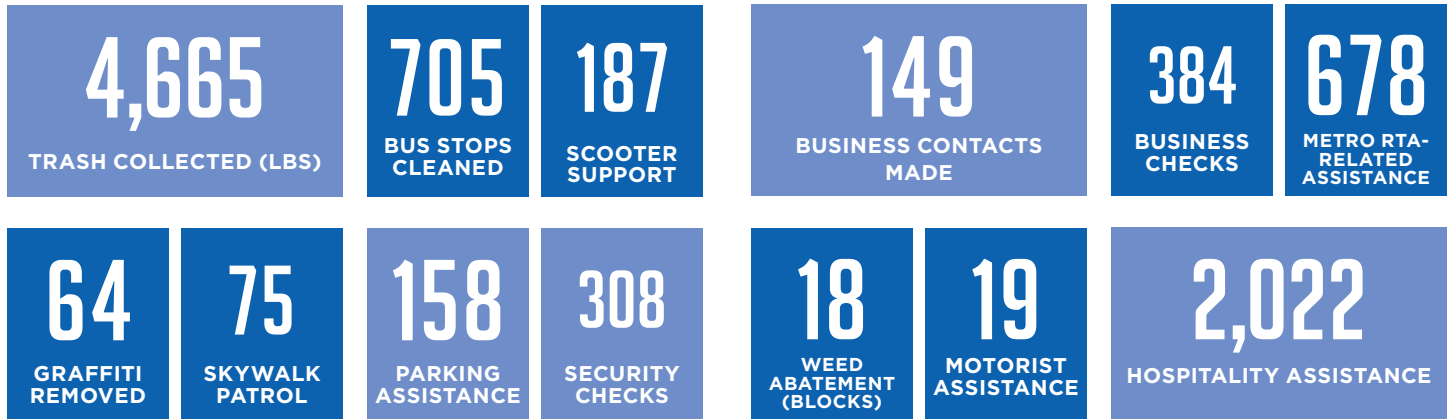
[Click here to READ MORE and view additional photos.](#)

DOWNTOWN PROGRAMS



CLEAN, SAFE & WELCOMING

DAP Ambassador Stats Apr. 1 - June 30, 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.*](#)



“I just wanted to give a shout out to Darrell Stamps. One of our clients just locked his keys in his car at our office & Darrell came within 10 minutes to unlock it. Our client would not have had the funds to call a company, so we cannot thank you guys enough for this service. Darrell was so kind & nice to work with!”—*Miranda, Assistant Director of Operations, Victim Assistance Program*



Downtown Guides & Stories

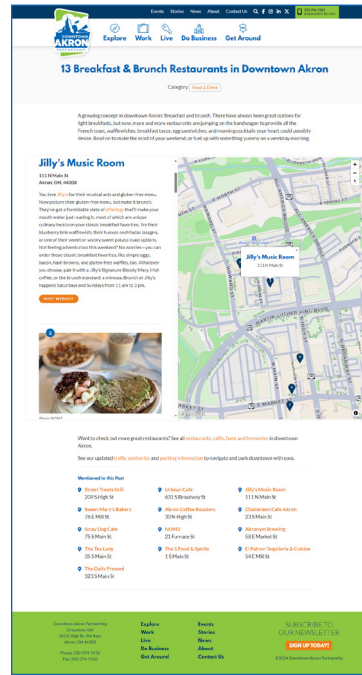
We'll do the planning, you make the memories. DAP's growing list of downtown Guides can help you make a day of it in downtown Akron. *(click each to read)*

Guides

- [8 Downtown Akron Restaurant Patios for Dreamy Summer Dining \(NEW!\)](#)
- [Make Downtown Akron Your Next Weekend Getaway \(NEW!\)](#)
- [Downtown Akron Self-Guided Public Art Tour, part 1 \(NEW!\)](#)

Stories

- [2024 Sakura Festival Welcomes 8,000 to Downtown Akron](#)
- [The Inaugural Downtown Akron South Asian Celebration Recap](#)
- [2024 Downtown Akron Juneteenth Celebration Recap](#)



NEW Feature: Downtown Guides with "Trail" Functionality

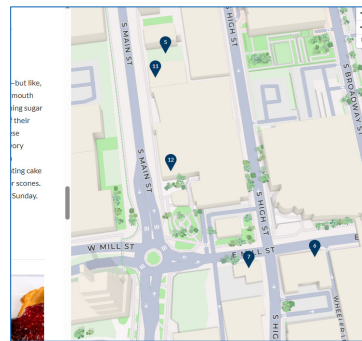
We have added an interactive map to **the desktop display*** of the many of the guides on the DAP website.

This means when you scroll through the locations listed in the guide, the map automatically shows you where each location is in relation to the others. Now you can experience a guide like [13 Breakfast & Brunch Restaurants in Downtown Akron](#) as a downtown Breakfast & Brunch Trail.

The interactive maps also have more dimensionality, so you also get a sense of what the physical space looks like!

Try it out & let us know what you think at info@downtownakron.com.

***On your smartphone**, the map appears at the bottom of the list. It does have the added dimensionality, but does not scroll automatically.



DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

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	Q1 - 2024	Q2 - 2024
	FACEBOOK	16,548*	17,235
	TWITTER	9,381	9,360
	INSTAGRAM	9,285	9,508
	LINKEDIN	2,836	2,972

	WEBSITE TRAFFIC	Q1 - 2024	Q2 - 2024
	USERS	87,975	119,390
	SESSIONS	111,932	157,794
	UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS	198,590	274,998

	EMAIL NEWSLETTER	Q2 - 2024
	NUMBER PUBLISHED	33
	SENDS	218,019
	OPENS	67,643
	CLICKS	10,165
	SUBSCRIBERS	19,474

*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, and follow us on social media @DowntownAkronPartnership.

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Polymer Industry Cluster Selected for \$51M Federal Phase 2 Investment

The Polymer Industry Cluster, a collaboration of private and public partners focused on innovation and investment opportunities for the region's legacy materials industry powered by the Greater Akron Chamber, has been named the recipient of a \$51 million federal investment as part of the EDA Tech Hubs Phase 2 awards. The Polymer Industry Cluster is one of 12 award recipients nationally. These funds will be used to advance a hub of innovation, growth and investment for the United States focused on sustainable polymers. This work will create differentiated strategic advantage in sustainable polymers for the U.S. and jobs, growth and investment for the region. —*Greater Akron Chamber Press Release, July 2, 2024*

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



Mission Possible: Akron Lock 3 Renovations Making Progress

The renovations began a year ago. What was promised is coming to life on time and on budget, officials said. Over 500 thousand people would flood into Lock 3 annually for concerts, festivals and events. But the past pavilion was only temporary.

“We kind of often joke it was a 20-year pop-up that was the most successful pop-up,” remarks [Dan] Rice. “And all we want to do is build upon that great success, but turn it into a 365-day park.”

The new Maynard Performance Pavilion is a permanent structure, with updated tech for lighting and sound. Described as one of a kind, it has three different performance spaces, from thousands of people to just a couple hundred. It's the park's main attraction.

—*Jeff Reidel, WKYC Channel 3, July 1, 2024*

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



Cascade Plaza's Comeback Plan Gets a \$5M Boost from Ohio lawmakers

A \$5 million state funding boost for Akron's Cascade Plaza will help to make the block a “hub of downtown's comeback,” Mayor Shammas Malik said Wednesday.

The city is receiving money for the project from what some lawmakers have called the “super duper fund”—a one-time \$700 million local project fund through which Ohio lawmakers can identify and fulfill grant requests. The fund, divided equally between both houses of the state legislature—was created from federal money that Ohio amassed during the COVID-19 pandemic. —*Derek Kreider, Akron Beacon Journal, June 13, 2024*

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

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Akron City Council approves ARPA Funds to Aid Entrepreneurs, Black-Owned Businesses

Akron City Council approved legislation Monday designed to give a leg up to small businesses, especially Black-owned establishments.

Council approved awarding \$750,000 in American Rescue Plan Act federal funds to three community partners—Akron Urban League, Western Reserve Community Fund and Bounce Innovation Hub—that will collaborate with the city and small business entrepreneurs to stabilize and strengthen their businesses through technical assistance, business and financial counseling and access to affordable professional services.—*Derek Kreider, Akron Beacon Journal, May 14, 2024*

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

Renovated 159 Main Building Home to Residential Units and Mix of Businesses

Right across the street from Crave on the corner of Main and Bowery streets, the 11-story 159 Main structure was formerly known as the Law Building—and before that, the Key Building and Second National Bank Building.

The building has undergone several changes since owner Tom Rybak purchased the property in 2016 for \$2 million.

He said he's since put about \$27 million into improvements, not only adding luxury apartments on the top six floors, but also renovating the space to accommodate commercial tenants such as Signal Akron, NAC Products and Market on Main, as well as an event area.—*Patrick Williams, Akron Beacon Journal, Apr. 26, 2024*

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

Akron Developer Transforming Downtown Building into Apartments, New Restaurant

Akron developer Tony Troppe is creating a mixed-use concept at the historical Evans Building at 333-335 S. Main St. in Akron that will include about 35 loft apartments, a chicken-and-waffle restaurant and a conference room.

Features such as terrazzo and marble floors and a bank vault in the basement will remain.

Evelyn's Coffee & Banh Mi is in a three-story annex with the address 11 E. Exchange St. that is included in the project and will stay in operation, Troppe said, adding that he plans to work with Evelyn's to expand its menu and kitchen.—*Patrick Williams, Akron Beacon Journal, June. 28, 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!](#)

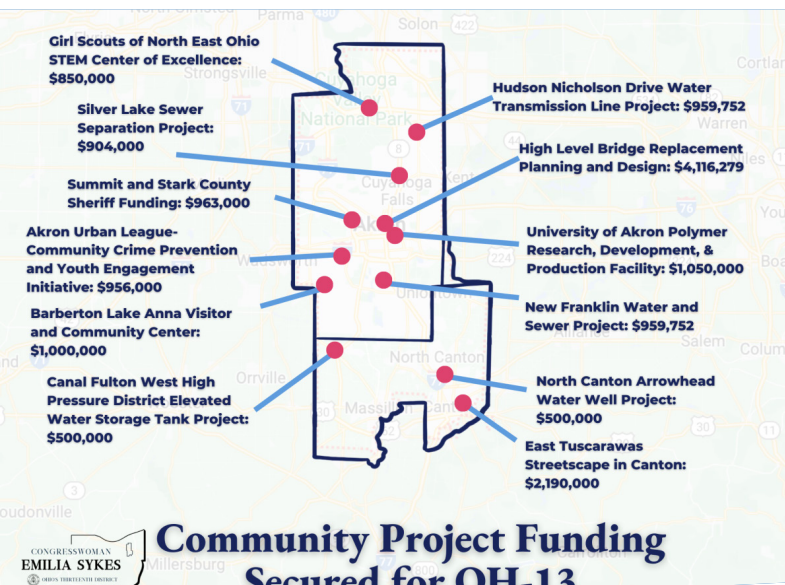
Visit downtownakron.com/do-business to view the ways in which DAP can help you relocate or start your business in downtown.

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



Urban League, University of Akron Get Share of \$14.9M in Federal funds

Two projects in Akron are slated to receive part of more than \$14.9 million coming into the area from the Consolidations Appropriations Act of 2024.

The projects were submitted as part of U.S. Rep. Emilia Sykes' funding request to the House Appropriations Committee for Ohio's 13th Congressional District—each representative may request "earmarks" for up to 15 projects in fiscal year 2024.

To help continue its work with polymers, the University of Akron will receive \$1,050,000 for the construction of a roughly 20,000-square-foot building on campus that will house a Polymer Research, Development and Production Facility that will contain a polymerization scale-up laboratory and other labs as well as a manufacturing incubator for new materials and a space to test materials.—*Kassi Filkins, Signal Akron, Mar. 13, 2024*

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

ACF Distributes Nearly \$7M in Quarterly Grants

Akron Community Foundation's board of directors recently announced grants totaling \$6.8 million and approved \$671,100 in arts and culture grants chosen by the foundation's Community Investment Committee.

This quarter's arts and culture funding included a \$50,000 grant to the City of Akron for the annual Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival, which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. As part of the summer series, a professional dance stage and performances are set up at area parks.—*Akron Community Foundation Press Release, June. 18, 2024.*

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

GAR Distributes Nearly \$2M to Akron-area Nonprofits in May

Nearly \$2 million of grants were recently approved at GAR Foundation's May distribution meeting, with a key focus on the interconnectedness of local arts and culture organizations as catalysts for economic and community development in Akron.

"We believe that a thriving arts and culture sector is essential for a vibrant community," said Christine Amer Mayer, President of GAR Foundation. "By supporting these organizations, we are not only preserving Akron's rich artistic and cultural history, but also stimulating economic development and improving the quality of life for all residents."



ARTS

The Gum Dip Theater performs *Brokers without Borders* Photo by Jessa Gaffney.



CULTURE

Painting at Akron Children's Museum. Photo by Traci Buckner.



COMMUNITY

Summit Choral Society performs *Tapestry of Songs* at Akron Art Museum. Photo by Rachel Baker.

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Foundation awarded \$125,000 in operating support to ArtsNow for their strategic efforts to leverage arts investments to attract tourism, generate jobs, revitalize neighborhoods, and enhance the overall health and happiness of Akron residents.

“The arts and culture sector in greater Akron isn’t just a cultural asset; it’s an economic engine driving growth,” said ArtsNow Executive Director Nicole Mullet. “For every dollar invested in the arts, there’s a return of over \$7 in local economic activity. ArtsNow stands at the forefront, maximizing our creativity to fuel Akron’s prosperity.”—*GAR Foundation Press Release, May, 2024*

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

Proactive Grant to Help with Equitable Downtown Development

Akron Community Foundation’s board of directors recently approved a proactive grant that will help bring equitable access for future investment and development to downtown Akron. The \$52,000 grant to Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP) will enable the organization to develop an equitable framework as it continues to bring new businesses and residency to the city’s core.

Much like the Elevate Greater Akron initiative, an areawide partnership that focuses in part on equitable housing and commercial real estate, this project will create a framework that “informs and instructs equitable economic development holistically,” according to DAP. For example, one of the main recommendations of an earlier downtown plan includes a possible hotel near the John S. Knight Center; an equitable framework would help ensure that equity be considered when including contractors, suppliers, and employees as part of this development, said Kimberly Beckett, vice president and interim president of Downtown Akron Partnership.—*Akron Community Foundation Press Release, Mar. 22, 2024*

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

Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau Debuts “Savor the Scenic in Summit”

Savor the Scenic in Summit was introduced as an initiative aimed at showcasing the natural beauty and cultural richness of Summit County. This campaign will assist ASCVB’s efforts to promote Summit County as a destination for travelers and community members seeking outdoor adventure and cultural exploration.

“This campaign will encourage visitors, community members, and those living near Summit County borders to find a new experience,” [Stephanie Berry, ASCVB’s VP of Marketing & Brand Management] stated. “This initiative is the result of collaborative efforts between the ASCVB, our



SAVOR THE SCENIC
IN SUMMIT 

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



partners, and the community, and we're excited to uncover the beauty and wonder of Summit County with visitors."—*Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau Press Release, May 13, 2024*

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

Summit County Named Recovery-Friendly Workplace

Summit County Council received an update on the Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative at the May 13 meeting and declared Summit County as a recovery-friendly workplace.

Rachel Madigan, with the Department of Administration and Public Information for the Summit County Executive's Office, said county Executive Ilene Shapiro has emphasized internal efforts to combat the ongoing opioid crisis.

"Today, the Executive's Office becomes one of the first 15 employers in Summit County designated as a recovery-friendly workplace," said Madigan.

Administered by Summit County Public Health, Madigan said the initiative seeks to improve employee and worksite health in the county by recognizing recovery from substance use disorder as a strength. She added that as part of the program, human resource personnel attended an orientation with public health staff to learn new ideas to use to best serve employees in recovery, including changing the way they speak about addiction to reduce stigma.—*Emily Scharf, Akron.com, May 16, 2024*

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



Stay Updated on Lock 3 Renovation Progress

Akron Civic Commons has released regular video updates explaining the work and the progress that has been made on the renovation of Lock 3. View and share them at the links below.

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

[View Update # 5, June 3, 2024](#)

[View Update # 6, July 17, 2024](#)

Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad Acquires 2 New Historic Engines

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad has added a couple historic train engines to its fleet.

And these 2 workhorses are no stranger to a national park.

The scenic railroad that makes daily excursions through the Cuyahoga Valley National Park has acquired two



NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

American Locomotive Company engines from the Grand Canyon Railway, which takes passengers on excursions to see one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

The acquisition is part of the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad's \$3 million capital campaign to preserve and expand its fleet of vintage locomotives.—*Craig Webb, Akron Beacon Journal, June 23, 2024*

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

Nightlight Cinema Prepares to Celebrate 10th Anniversary by Adding Second Screen

What started as a community formed around cinema will celebrate its 10th anniversary this summer.

The Nightlight Cinema, the city's home for lovers of films— independent and otherwise—is adding a second screen and doubling the seating capacity.

“We will have the access to the space soon where it's going to go. And we're hoping to begin construction in July is my goal,” said Jenn Kidd, the theater's executive director.—*George M. Thomas, Akron Beacon Journal, May 23, 2024*

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

UA, Joffrey Ballet School Partner to Offer Degree in Dance for New York Trainees

The University of Akron and Joffrey Ballet School have forged a partnership for pre-professional dancers that will start in the fall, pairing UA's academics with the Joffrey's world-class dance training school in New York.

That means dancers in the Joffrey trainee program will continue their pre-professional dance training in New York while simultaneously earning a Bachelor for Fine Arts in Dance from the University of Akron by taking general studies courses online to fit with their dance schedule. To pursue this Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance, students must successfully audition for the New York Joffrey training program and also be accepted at the University of Akron.—*Kerry Clawson, Akron Beacon Journal, May 18, 2024*

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

Married in 15 minutes: Akron Drive-Thru Wedding Business Brings Bit of Vegas to Ohio

For \$50, couples can get married in Akron in 15 minutes from the comfort of their car with a quick call to licensed officiant and notary Stephanie Singleton.



NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Phil and Lakeyonia Honor knew they wanted to spend the rest of their lives together as soon as possible after three years together. In an Akron park on May 22, the couple made it official with a “drive-thru” wedding—though they did get out of the car.

Born and raised in Akron, Singleton started Drive-Thru Weddings and Notary for people who want their marriage legal now so they can plan a wedding later. She was inspired by the sign-and-go weddings from her time as a wedding officiant in Las Vegas.—*Isabella Schreck, Akron Beacon Journal, July 1, 2024*

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

Cafe Arnone Launches New Downtown Spot in Atrium of Akron Municipal Court

Cafe Arnone, which opened for business this spring at its new location in the atrium of the Akron Municipal Court Building, has been adding some of its Italian flavor to the downtown Akron scene.

The courthouse moved from the deteriorating Harold K. Stubbs Center to the newly renovated, former Oliver Ocasek Building nearby at 172 S. Broadway St. in November. What many people don't know is that the lunch counter at the courthouse's new home offers several sandwiches, a Mediterranean salad, pastries and just about all the drinks you can get at Cafe Arnone's original Fairlawn location.—*Kerry Clawson, Akron Beacon Journal, June 13, 2024*

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

Sojourner Truth Legacy Plaza featured in Essence Magazine

Hundreds gathered in Akron, Ohio, on Wednesday to unveil the plaza and statue where the Universalist Old Stone Church once stood, the location of the Ohio Women's Rights Convention, The Associated Press reports.

Sojourner Truth, born Isabella Bomfree in the Hudson Valley around 1797, was a formerly enslaved person. After securing her freedom in 1826, she took the name Sojourner Truth and became an influential abolitionist and women's rights pioneer. Her 1851 speech drew upon her experiences of slavery and questioned why her humanity and that of other enslaved African Americans were not recognized as equal to that of white Americans.

The new Sojourner Truth Legacy Plaza, which replaces the old church site, features a statue by artist Woodrow Nash, an Akron, Ohio native. The statue depicts Truth holding a book, symbolizing her literacy and advocacy. It stands atop an impala lily, Ghana's national flower, honoring Truth's paternal heritage.—*Melissa Noel, Essence, June 3, 2024*

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

BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

GOOD THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN DOWNTOWN AKRON. DON'T MISS OUT—BEACON JOURNAL EDITORIAL BOARD

Things are looking up in downtown Akron.

There are new restaurants, a new Lock 3 park under construction and a new tribute to a national leader in the abolitionist and women's rights movements debuting this month.

With Memorial Day weekend marking the unofficial start of summer, why not make plans to check out what's happening in the heart of our city?

Years ago, downtown Akron served as the economic, social and shopping hub for the region. Long-time residents have fond memories of making the trek to Main Street to shop at O'Neil's or Polsky's Department Store. [Find out more.](#)

LIVE MUSIC SOCIETY NAMES JILLY'S MUSIC ROOM A 2024 MUSIC IN ACTION GRANTEE

The Music in Action grant is designed to help venue owners and managers implement creative ideas that can expand their audience, engage with their community, and generate new sources of revenue. With inclusivity as a core component, our Music in Action grant recipients are further empowered to cultivate a sense of unity with their projects. [Find out more.](#)

SUMMIT CHORAL SOCIETY SHOWCASES TALENT AT NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CHORAL FESTIVAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Summit Choral Society, a nationally recognized, award-winning choir based in Akron, Ohio, proudly announces its selection to perform at the prestigious National Memorial Day Choral Festival in Washington D.C. This esteemed invitation underscores the choir's exceptional reputation and commitment to musical excellence on a national scale. [Find out more.](#)

NBA DRAFT 2024: AKRON'S ENRIQUE FREEMAN PICKED BY INDIANA PACERS IN ROUND 2

University of Akron men's basketball star Enrique Freeman is an NBA draft pick — the first for the Zips program in nearly 40 years.

Freeman was drafted Thursday by the Indiana Pacers in the second round (No. 50 overall).

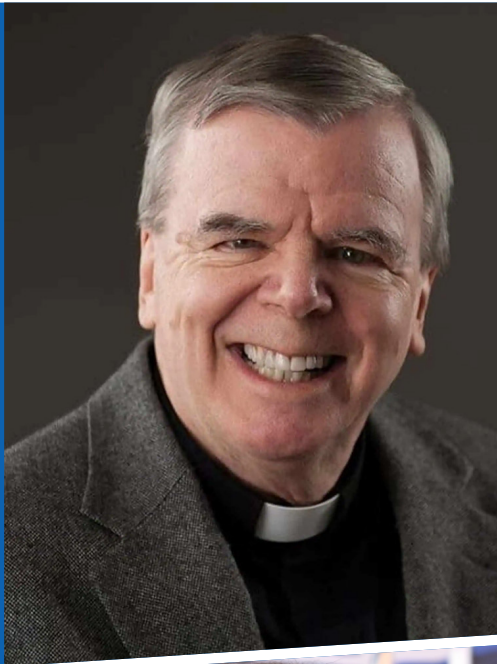
ESPN analyst Jonathan Givony said Freeman "might be the best story in the draft" during the network's telecast of the draft, and that Freeman impressed NBA coaches and executives with his "toughness" during "outstanding workouts." [Find out more.](#)

BOUNCE APPOINTS ELYSE BALL AS NEW VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMMING

Bounce Innovation Hub, a non-profit organization in Akron serving northeast Ohio entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses, is pleased to announce that Elyse Ball will join its team as its new Vice President of Programming starting July 1, 2024.



BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS



As the former Executive Director of the University of Akron Research Foundation, Elyse brings a wealth of strategic leadership experience spanning over a decade guiding entrepreneurs and startups through the intricate challenges of launching, growing, and funding new commercial enterprises. Under her leadership, the National Science Foundation I-Corps program at The University of Akron has guided over 1,000 faculty, students, and area entrepreneurs on technology commercialization and lean launchpad methods for launching new startups. [Find out more.](#)

FATHER NORM DOUGLAS NAMED 2024 RECIPIENT OF THE BERT A. POLSKY HUMANITARIAN AWARD

The Rev. Norm Douglas, co-founder of Heart to Heart Leadership, has been named the 2024 recipient of Akron Community Foundation's Bert A. Polsky Humanitarian Award. The Catholic priest will receive the award at a dinner Oct. 15 at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn.

Douglas will be the 55th recipient of the award, which the foundation presents each year to an individual or couple who has shown selfless dedication to humanitarian causes in Akron. The award is named for the former president of Polsky's department store and founding trustee of the foundation. [Find out more.](#)



LAURA DICOLA JOINS GAR FOUNDATION AS SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER FOR EDUCATION

GAR Foundation is delighted to announce the appointment of Laura DiCola as its new Senior Program Officer for Education. With a distinguished career spanning law, education, and non-profit leadership, Laura brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to advancing educational opportunities for all.

Laura DiCola joins GAR Foundation from the TMW Center for Early Learning + Public Health at the University of Chicago, where she served as Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Strategic Partnerships. At the TMW Center, Laura played a pivotal role in applying science, data, and technology to support early brain development, ensuring every child can reach their full potential. [Find out more.](#)



LIEBERTH COMMUNITY VISION AWARD RECIPIENT FOR 2024 IS RETIRED AKRON POLICE DEPARTMENT CAPT. SYLVIA TRUNDLE

"Sylvia's remarkable law enforcement career and her dedication to community service exemplify the leadership qualities we celebrate with this award," said Justin Everett Hilton, president and CEO of Leadership Akron, in a statement. "Her commitment to mentoring future leaders, strategic insights, and heartfelt compassion have profoundly impacted Akron. Sylvia's work has not only enhanced public safety but has also strengthened numerous community organizations. We

BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

are thrilled to recognize her achievements and look forward to her continued influence in inspiring the next generation of leaders.” [Find out more.](#)

MAYOR MALIK DECLARES APRIL 16, 2024 TERESA LEGRAIR DAY WITH PROCLAMATION

Akron Urban League President and CEO, Teresa R. LeGrair, has been honored by the City of Akron, Summit County, and The State of Ohio with proclamations for her tireless dedication and leadership as she prepares for a well deserved retirement. April 16, 2024 is officially recognized as Teresa LeGrair Day! [Find out more.](#)

STATE AND FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS, INC. RELEASES 2023 CSR ANNUAL REPORT 30TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

Highlights from the 2023 CSR Annual Report 30th Anniversary Special Edition include:

\$113,014 donated to the United Way of Summit and Medina during State and Federal Communications, Inc.’s 24th annual United Way Campaign;

75 dozen donuts and 21 gallons of cider sold during its 13th Annual Donut and Cider Sale with all sales benefiting United Way of Summit and Medina;

\$7,050 raised for the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank’s Harvest for Hunger Campaign, providing the equivalent of 28,200 meals for families in need. [Find out more.](#)

AKRON200 LAUNCHES NEW BICENTENNIAL WEBSITE

Akron 200 Inc. launched a new website, www.Akron200.org. Akron 200 is the non-profit organization set up by the city and the Akron Bicentennial Commission to help plan and execute the City of Akron’s 200th anniversary celebration. The new website features an events calendar, ways to participate, sponsorship opportunities, Akron history, board and commission information, and coming soon will be an online shop for official Bicentennial merchandise. Anyone can sign up to volunteer or submit an event or vendor application on the site. [Find out more.](#)

AKRON MUNICIPAL COURT AWARDED 2024 AKRON BAR ASSOCIATION DIVERSITY AWARD

The Akron Municipal Court was awarded the 2024 Akron Bar Association Diversity Award during the organization’s annual Law Day Luncheon. This award recognizes and celebrates organizations and individuals that demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion in Summit County.

Akron Municipal Court was nominated and received the award on behalf of its standout programs recognizing diversity, equity and inclusion as key values. [Find out more.](#)

LEADERSHIP AKRON UNVEILS SIGNATURE CLASS 41

In its continued mission to cultivate community engagement and leadership, Leadership Akron proudly announces the 44 members of Signature Class 41. This year’s class embodies a diverse group of dynamic leaders poised to further enhance their impact across the Greater Akron area.

Leadership Akron’s Signature Program equips leaders to broaden their community influence through a rigorous 10-month journey. Participants delve into key community issues and develop collaborative skills necessary for effective leadership. [Find out more and view the list of Signature Class 41 members.](#)

SUMMIT ARTSPACE ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF 2024 ARTS ALIVE AWARDS

For more than 20 years, the Arts Alive Awards have recognized gifted local artists, talented arts educators, and change-making advocates who bring the arts to life and shape our creative community.

“Summit Artspace champions the efforts of local artists every day, so we are thrilled to recognize this incredible cohort of arts professionals,” notes Summit Artspace’s Executive Director, Heather Meeker. “These local artists—and those who mentor and support them—challenge us to think differently and celebrate what it means to be creative, and human.” [Find out more and view the list of award recipients.](#)



TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT

FEATURED PROPERTY

328 S. Main St.



18,400 SF of space with 29 feet of frontage on S. Main St.

Highlights

- New, lower price
- Iconic building located in the historic Main Street and Exchange District
- Prime for new mixed-use redevelopment or owner user
- Three floors: basement, 1, 2 plus small 3rd floor room and sub-basement

- Former bank vaults intact
- DJ booths and dance floors
- Sink, stoves, refrigerators, ice cooler, and kitchen equipment remain
- Close proximity to other downtown amenities including Lock 3, Akron Civic Theatre, Canal Place, Towpath Trail, Retail, Restaurants, and Entertainment

For more information, contact Kimberly Beckett
330-374-7676 | kbeckett@downtownakron.com

FEATURED BUSINESS

Boiling House & Sushi Bar



If you're looking for fresh seafood and sushi in Akron, Ohio, then come to Boiling House Seafood Restaurant! Boiling House serves a variety of seafood and sushi, including Fried Crawfish, Japanese Squid Salad, Snow Crab Legs,

Shrimp Tempura Roll. Located a couple of blocks west of the University of Akron and near Canal Park at 1 W. Exchange St.

Open Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, 3 - 10 pm;
Friday - Sunday, 12 - 11 pm
Closed Tuesday

METRO RTA DONATES A BUS FOR THE FOREVER R CHILDREN SHOWER BUS

Earlier this spring METRO RTA donated a bus to local nonprofit Forever R Children, who transformed it into a mobile shower bus for our unhoused community members. The official ribbon-cutting ceremony in the parking lot across from the RKP Transit Center took place on June 6, 2024.



"The bus will host events at one or two area locations weekly. It's more than just a place to wash up, providing its guests with access to social service providers offering housing, health, and human service referrals as well as food, clothing, toiletries and more. The frequency of these services will be determined by the availability of funding."—Akron Beacon Journal, June 6, 2024

[Find out more.](#)

METRO
Think Outside THE BUS!
A podcast about the stories, partnerships, & happenings in and around METRO buses.
Listen on Spotify!

Every Other Wednesday at 2:00 PM

ADD THINK OUTSIDE THE BUS TO YOUR PODCAST LIST

Think Outside the Bus is a podcast about the stories, partnerships, & happenings in and around METRO buses. Recent guests have

included Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Acting Administrator, Veronica Vanterpool, Akron NAACP President Judi Hill, and METRO CEO Dawn Distler, covering a variety of topics, including women in transit, voter registration, what it takes to be a bus operator, the METRO Mechanic Apprenticeship Program and much more.

[Find out more.](#)

ICYMI: (IN CASE YOU MISSED IT)

Leon Henderson and Brian Harding Sworn in as Fire Chief and Chief of Police.

“**Chief Henderson** is a well-known and established member of our community,” Malik said. “He has served the Akron Fire Department for 34 years, beginning his career as a firefighter and paramedic in 1990. I knew Chief Henderson as district chief during my time on council, and I’m thrilled to see his resilient discipline and purposeful mindset guide him through his leadership and uplift him through the ranks.”—*Derek Kreider, Akron Beacon Journal, July 2, 2024. [Find out more.](#)*

[Brian] Harding said moments after Akron Mayor Shammamas Malik administered the oath. “As I take on this role, I am acutely aware of the challenges and possibilities that lie ahead. I look forward to our collective work to address these obstacles together. I embrace the opportunity to lead our department that’s focused on community engagement, recruitment and retention and the reduction of violent crime.”—*Ryan Haidet, WKYC, May 28, 2024. [Find out more.](#)*

Akron Mayor Malik Delivers First State of the City Address

Akron Mayor Shammamas Malik delivered his first State of the City address at the Akron Civic Theatre in front of a crowd of 1,500 residents, business leaders, non-profit partners, elected officials, and more. The hour-long speech focused on the Mayor’s priorities in the first 100 days of the administration, detailing successes, acknowledging difficulties, and highlighting what’s next. [Find out more.](#)

Akron Organizations Set Up Gun Violence Response Fund

The City of Akron, Akron Community Foundation, and Victim Assistance Program Inc. announced the creation of a Gun Violence Response Fund to support the victims and families of the June 2nd shooting on Kelly Avenue.

The fund has been created at Akron Community Foundation to support the work of Victim Assistance Program Inc. in helping individuals and families navigate through crisis situations and stabilize their lives. Akron Community Foundation and United Way of Summit & Medina are both providing \$25,000 in initial funding and the City of Akron is bringing legislation to City Council today to approve \$150,000 in initial funding.

“The fund is live today and anyone can make a donation at akroncf.org/GunViolenceResponseFund,” said Akron Mayor Shammamas Malik. “This fund gives our community an opportunity to rally together and whether it’s \$25, \$250, or \$2,500, every donation helps support victims of gun violence. We’ve been asked a lot about how folks can help, and this is a clear and direct way that anyone can support those who are impacted.” [Find Out More.](#)



GUN VIOLENCE RESPONSE FUND

Supporting the work of Victim Assistance Program, Inc. in helping individuals and families navigate through crisis situations and stabilize their lives.



Scan the QR code to learn more, or visit akroncf.org/GunViolenceResponseFund



AKRON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1988





Projecto Raices & Downtown Akron Partnership Present

4TH ANNUAL AKRON LATIN FESTIVAL

Saturday, September 14 | 4 - 9 pm
 Cascade Plaza | 122 S. Main St.
 FOOD. MUSIC. DANCE, and MORE

IN HONOR OF
 HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH.
 LET'S CELEBRATE!



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 Or visit downtownakron.com.



COMING SEPTEMBER 14: THE 4TH ANNUAL AKRON LATIN FESTIVAL

Projecto Raices Presents
3RD ANNUAL AKRON LATIN FESTIVAL
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UPCOMING:

- Fri. July 26 | [44th Annual African American Festival](#)
- Fri. July 26 | [Rubber City Tattoo Invitational](#)
- Fri. August 2 | [Hotel California Eagles Tribute with Marcus Smith](#)
- Sat. August 3 | [Who's Bad with Muamin Collective](#)
- Fri. August 9 | [Parrots of the Caribbean Jimmy Buffet Tribute with Umojah Nation](#)
- Fri. August 9 | [Friday Night Out on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad](#)
- Sat. August 10 | [We Are the Weirdos Punk Rock Flea Market](#)

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6PM - 9:30PM

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HOSTED BY LISARAYE & DJ ENVY

ENTERTAINMENT: HIP HOP VIOLINISTS HUMBLE G & FIDDLA & MULLANIEE COMEDIAN ROB ALLEN

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GENERAL ADMISSION \$125
 VIP: (LIMITED) \$300

INCLUDES: TABLE & SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS AT EVENT PLUS FREE ADMISSION TO THE STAR STUDDED AFTER PARTY

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 AUG. 3, 2024

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)

Smells Like Snow
 Coffee Festival
 Downtown Akron

CASCADE PLAZA
 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2
 12:00 - 4:00 P.M.

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

FALL FEST

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 | 4 - 9 PM
 4 - 7 PM

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

Free Outdoor Screening of Hocus Pocus on Cascade Plaza

For all things
 downtown Akron:
downtownakron.com
 or scan the QR code to
 view the event calendar