

DOWNTOWN AKRON QUARTERLY UPDATE



2ND QUARTER 2022
DOWNTOWN AKRON SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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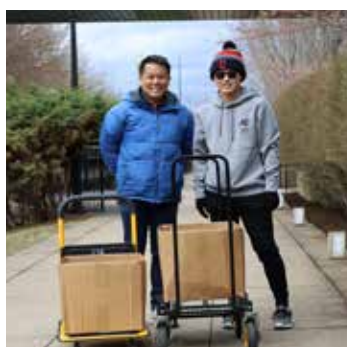
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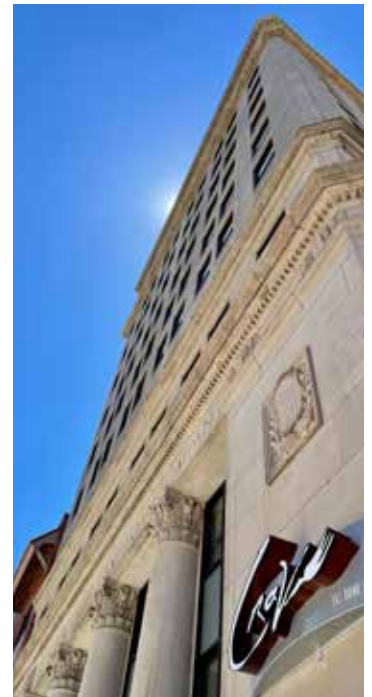
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DOWNTOWN AKRON, 2ND QUARTER 2022



WORKING FOR DOWNTOWN

After the Jayland Walker Tragedy

We are deeply grateful for our community's respect for the right to peacefully demonstrate and publicly grieve the tragic events that occurred in June. We continue to grieve and heal with all of you.

As we heal, we invite you to come downtown, where there are so many opportunities to find community.

We are committed to building a downtown for all people, and though there is a great deal of work to be done

before people are truly treated equitably regardless of the color of their skin, we will work every day to create spaces where everyone is able to find solace in togetherness.

We are humbled by the grace, kindness, courage, and compassion of our community. We know, however, that we are all still struggling to move through this challenging time. You are not alone. If you need support, there are community resources available to help, [some of which are listed here](#).

Downtown Small Businesses and Storefronts in the News

Perfect Pour owners happy to be in downtown Akron with new bourbon, burger business, by Kerry Clawson, Akron Beacon Journal: Bourbon and burgers seemed like the perfect pairing for the three co-owners of Perfect Pour, a new business in the heart of downtown Akron.

The bar and grill, located at 376 S. Main St., offers 81 bourbons and eight specialty burgers, plus a build-your-own burger option.

Perfect Pour offers whiskey, martinis, craft cocktails and craft beers. It also calls itself "home of the flights," offering bourbon, martinis and craft beer flights.

Owners Terrence Shavers, Kameron Alexander and Robert Putnam started renovating their new business space, located between DaVinci's and Diamond Deli where Woody's Bar used to be, right after they acquired it in December. The 32-seat establishment now has a



new marble-looking epoxy bar, booths featuring smoked wood and thick, wood-hewn shelves on the brick wall behind the bar. [READ MORE](#)

Akron-based developer will drive you 'mad' with their first video game hitting Steam this year, by Sean McDonnell, Cleveland.com: A new video game that looks like a cross between Call of Duty Zombies, Among Us and a horror-themed board game is trying to make players go "mad," and it was developed by an Akron-based company.

"The Grip of Madness" will be RustBit Studio's first game and is scheduled to hit digital shelves in October. The game will be in early access on Steam, a digital marketplace for video games. A demo version is already available.

RustBit Studio's four members joined together after splitting from another startup more focused on machine learning in 2021. Their office is currently at Bounce Innovation Hub in Akron where they're getting aid from the business incubator. [READ MORE](#)

New Downtown Akron Shop Takes the Lead in Taking Down Plywood

"I feel like now is the time, because no matter what ... in the face of tragedy, in the face of joy, people need spaces to gather," [Da'Shika] Street [owner of Street Craftery] said. "Expressing yourself through creativity is a healthy way of dealing with any challenge you could be facing in life..."

Craft projects at her store include painting, candle-making, splatter painting and cement-pouring, she said.



Creativity on view at Street Craftery. Photo: Mull Media

She hopes eventually, people will be more willing to come downtown and find entertainment—and even self-care—through her crafts.

"I feel like it's important to really have a space where people can come, and to know that this is a safe space. You are welcome here," Street said. "Today marks day one of charging forward and just really looking out to a bright future." — Anna Huntsman, *ideastream public media*, Jul. 20, 2022

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

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



above: [The Goodrich](#), 530 S. Main St., 330-607-9617
top left: [Northside Lofts](#), 21 Furnace St., 330-928-1988

Residential Development as of Q2 - 2022

90% Residential
Occupancy

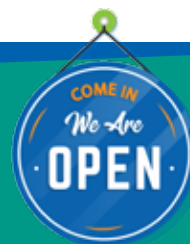
UNITS OPENED	UNITS IN CONSTRUCTION	UNITS RENOVATED	PLANNED UNITS
174	86	499	144

Business Development

Office Occupancy

	OCCUPANCY RATE	AVG ASKING RATE (PER SQ. FT.)
H1 - 2022	85.7%	\$17.36
H2 - 2021	81.2%	\$16.77
H1 - 2021	80.2%	\$16.54
H2 - 2020	80.7%	\$16.24

*Data from CBRE



Business Outreach

Q2 - 2022	CONTACTS MADE*
RETAIL BUSINESS CONTACTS	69
NON-RETAIL BUSINESS CONTACTS	62
RETAIL AND BUSINESS PROSPECTS**	10

* 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



Sakura Celebration—A Collaborative Effort

April 9, 2022

Saturday, April 9, brought a full spectrum of weather conditions. From heavy flurries in the morning to a sunny afternoon and chilly, overcast evening, Saturday embodied the beautiful moodiness of springtime. For this, it was arguably the perfect weather for the Second Annual Sakura Cherry Blossom Celebration in downtown Akron.

Nearly 2,000 luminaries lined the Towpath Trail between Ohio & Erie Canal Park and Lock 3 with soft fuschia light. The luminaries provided an ethereal, calming presence that ushered visitors along the trail, both before and after dark. Although the cherry blossom (sakura) trees along the Towpath proved to be reluctant bloomers this year due to cooler temperatures, the flowers began to burst from their buds right on time for the celebration. These emerging blossoms made the walk along the canal—the main attraction of the evening—especially beautiful...

[*Find out more about the Sakura Celebration.*](#)



Juneteenth Dinner and Community Conversation

June 19, 2022

From the moment the figurative doors opened at 4:30 for the 5 p.m. ticketed dinner, people poured down the walkway at Lock 3, eager to check in, order a drink, have a seat, and savor the evening. Despite hundred-degree temperatures only days before, the weather cooled to the lower 60s for this outdoor event and brought with it brutal wind gusts that swept a few of the carefully folded cloth napkins all the way up to Main Street.

It didn't matter. Multigenerational families, groups of friends, and community acquaintances sat together, broke bread, and celebrated Juneteenth with warm conversation and palpable joy.

Dinner & Conversation

The Downtown Juneteenth Dinner & Conversation was planned by Downtown Akron Partnership in conversation with the North Hill Community Development Corporation, the Akron Black Artist Guild, the Summit County Historical Society, and several other individual community members. From the inaugural conversation in February to the execution of the event, committee members were extremely generous with their time, energy, ideas, and creativity.

[*Find out more about the Juneteenth Dinner and Community Conversation.*](#)



DOWNTOWN PROGRAMS



CLEAN, SAFE & WELCOMING

DAP Ambassador Stats Apr. 1 - June 30, 2022

7,994

TRASH COLLECTED (LBS)

870

BUS STOPS
CLEANED

862

SCOOTER
SUPPORT

379

BUSINESS CONTACTS
MADE

2,264

BUSINESS CHECKS

306

GRAFFITI
REMOVED

152

SKYWALK
PATROL

338

PARKING
ASSISTANCE

705

SECURITY
CHECKS

139

WEED
ABATEMENT
(block faces)

37

MOTORIST
ASSISTANCE

6,151

HOSPITALITY ASSISTANCE



Downtown Ambassador 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.*](#)



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	Q1 - 2022	Q2 - 2022
FACEBOOK	9,875	10,407
TWITTER	9,462	9,528
INSTAGRAM	6,444	6,646
LINKEDIN	1,661	1,772

WEBSITE TRAFFIC	Q1 - 2022	Q2 - 2022
USERS	86,671	87,045
SESSIONS	110,273	114,005
PAGE VIEWS	364,211	387,067

EMAIL NEWSLETTER	Q2 - 2022
NUMBER PUBLISHED	30
SENDS	171,451
OPENS	51,981
CLICKS	3,405
SUBSCRIBERS	17,516

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

Downtown Stories and Guides

DAP Stories present a closer look at some of downtown Akron's interesting events, places, and people.

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 to read*)

STORIES

- [Nepalese Parkour Aficionado Dinesh Sunar Breaks Yet Another World Record, in Downtown Akron](#)
- [A Look Back at Downtown Akron's 2022 Juneteenth Celebration](#)
- [Downtown Akron's Cascade Plaza: Then and Now](#)
- [How Goodyear Volunteers Helped Us Beautify Downtown This Year](#)
- [Ever Wonder how We Handle the Geese in Downtown Akron? Here's Your Answer](#)
- [Summit Suffrage Centennial to Honor Sojourner Truth with a Statue & Plaza in Downtown Akron](#)
- [Downtown Akron Ushers Spring at Second Annual Sakura Cherry Blossom Celebration](#)

GUIDES

- [37 Women-Owned Businesses in Downtown Akron](#)
- [The 11 Best Things About Living in Downtown Akron](#)
- [12 Things You Need to Do in Downtown Akron This Summer](#)
- [Your Guide to ArtWalk in Downtown Akron](#)
- [8 Downtown Akron Outings for Families with Kids](#)
- [11 Ways to Support Downtown Akron Businesses](#)

A World Record in Downtown Akron

In case you missed it, Akron is home to a holder of multiple Guinness World Records. Dinesh Sunar, whose adopted home is in North Hill, came to Akron from Nepal, where he is known as the "Parkour King." Sunar holds five certified Guinness World Records:

- Most twisting backflips off a wall in 30 seconds **(12)**
- Most backward somersaults against a wall in 30 seconds **(16)**
- Most twisting backflips off a wall in 60 seconds **(18)**
- Most standing full twist backflips in 30 seconds **(13)**
- Most backward somersaults while skipping in 30 seconds

On July 25, Sunar set a new record on Cascade Plaza, to the amazement of all: most full twist, back somersault burpees in 60 seconds **(12)**. [Find out more.](#)



NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



NE Ohio Polymer Industry Hopes for Big Boost from Federal Funds

“The region already is a finalist for a big Build Back Better grant that, along with matching private money, would fund the development of a new polymer center at the University of Akron.

The University of Akron, Case Western Reserve and Kent State universities, and the region’s entire polymer industry, will get a new research and development center—if backers win \$17 million in federal funding.

‘This investment stands to be a game changer for Akron and Northeast Ohio,’ said Chris Helsel, senior vice president of global operations and chief technical officer at Akron-based Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., via email. ‘There’s no question that this initiative will attract top talent and high-growth businesses to the area and drive other powerful economic outcomes for the community and companies of all sizes.’

Proponents expect to know in September if the project will become a reality, as that’s when they’ll learn whether the region’s application for \$75 million in Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant funding succeeds. The polymer cluster initiative is the biggest single component of that request.” —*Dan Shingler, Crain’s Cleveland Business, Apr. 24, 2022*

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

University of Akron Receives \$2M for Graduate Engineering Fellowships

“The University of Akron’s College of Engineering and Polymer Science has received a five-year, \$2 million grant from the National Science Foundation. The money will go toward training engineering grad students in using digital data to solve materials science problems.

Sadhan Jana is associate dean for research in the College of Engineering and Polymer Science. He says one example of where this could be applied would be the development of electric vehicle transport systems.”

“There is a lot of data-taking [and] artificial intelligence terminology that our graduate students do not know. And so, we are using this program to train 40 NRT [National Science Foundation Research Traineeship] fellows who would be able to understand the language of an electrical engineering colleague who is working in the same team. So, there would be seamless transfer of information from a materials scientist or a chemical engineer to an electrical engineer to a computer scientist.” —*Kabir Bhatia, ideastream public media, Apr. 26, 2022*

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



NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bounce Innovation Hub Receives Federal \$2M Grant to Support More Businesses

"An Akron nonprofit that supports entrepreneurs, start-ups and small businesses in Northeast Ohio has received a major grant to expand its efforts.

The Bounce Innovation Hub and city of Akron received a \$2 million grant from the US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) to renovate the second floor of the building where Bounce is housed, according to a news release.

Bounce plans to use the funds to add new office space, conference rooms and classrooms in the facility, which is owned by the city of Akron, said Jessica Sublett, chief operating officer and incoming CEO of Bounce.

'Our space is designed to bring people together, to build community and create connections that otherwise can't happen if you're doing everything from behind a computer screen,' Sublett said. 'Now is really a natural next step to expand the ability to bring more of the community together.'" —*Anna Huntsman, ideastream public media, May. 16, 2022*

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

Sojourner Truth Project: Preliminary Designs for National Monument in Akron

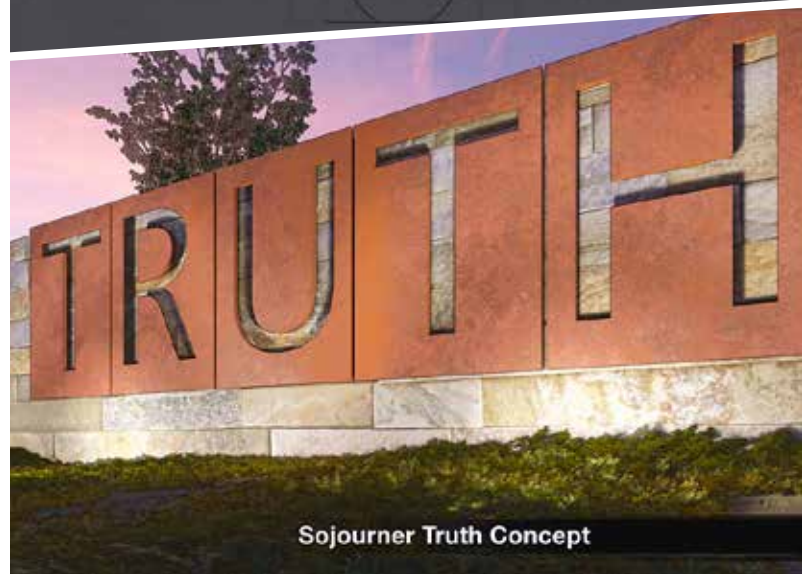
"As the anniversary nears of Sojourner Truth's celebrated 'Ain't I a Woman' speech in Akron, a dedicated group of women is at work bringing a years-long dream to fruition—a tribute as memorable and powerful as the life and work of the slave-turned-suffragette, built on the site where she made history.

In less than two years, the Sojourner Truth Project Committee plans to build a 10,000-square-foot plaza that will welcome visitors coming into Akron from the north, with the word 'TRUTH' clearly visible on entry. Near the plaza's center will be a sculpture of Sojourner Truth seated on an Impala lily, a petal design radiating outward from her feet, and her right hand extended in welcome.

'Truth is such a big word. It's so bold and so concrete. What it stands for is unwavering,' said Summit County Metro Parks' landscape architect Dion Harris, who the committee commissioned to design the plaza.

Truth was a powerful voice for women's rights, especially women of color. An emancipated New-York slave born Isabella Baumfree, she changed her name in 1843 before crisscrossing the nation to speak against slavery and for women's rights. —*Jennifer Conn, Spectrum News 1, May 18, 2022*

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



Sojourner Truth Concept

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Akron to Begin Construction on \$2M, 3-story History Center Downtown

"Akron is the only major city in Ohio without a space dedicated to chronicling its history—an issue officials plan to resolve with a grant to begin construction on a new museum slated to open downtown next fall.

Located at the Bowery at 172 S. Main St., the three-story, 3,000-square foot building will include exhibits, artifacts and photos sharing the city's history over 200 years, including 'stories that maybe haven't always been told,' Bicentennial Commission Executive Secretary David Lieberth said.

'Some of Akron's past that wasn't so good,' Lieberth said in a May 16 presentation to Akron City Council, citing the prevalence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s and the failed innerbelt project that displaced thousands of Black households in the 1960s. 'We like to brag about Akron's successes... but we've had failures in society and in the course of moving forward, there have been backward steps. Those are parts of Akron as well.'" —*Abbey Marshall, Akron Beacon Journal, May 26, 2022*

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



Akron Children's Museum's Expansion Plans, \$150,000 Fundraising Campaign

"Just like a kid, the Akron Children's Museum is growing up.

And just like a growing kid, it needs some additional space to stretch its legs.

The museum tucked in the corner of Akron's Lock 3 Park announced plans to expand its footprint by some 3,000 square feet.

The museum already occupies 15,000 square feet in space that was once a parking garage for the O'Neil's Department Store on South Main Street.

The plans call for a new kid-friendly music studio, a rocket exhibit along with a party room and community meeting space along with a revamped maker's space and other amenities." —*Craig Webb, Akron Beacon Journal, June 8, 2022*

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



NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Westinghouse Partnering with Echogen to Meet Long-Duration Energy Storage Needs

“Nuclear power firm Westinghouse Electric Company has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a state-owned energy company to build 2GWh of pumped thermal energy storage (PTES) capacity in Bulgaria.

The Pennsylvania-based firm’s MOU with Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH), announced on 5 May, calls for the installation of two PTES units providing 2GWh of energy storage.

Westinghouse has developed its own thermal storage technology, but has also partnered with Echogen Power Systems to meet the demand for long-duration energy storage (LDES). Echogen is an Ohio-based provider of waste-heat recovery systems and electro-thermal energy storage solutions the [CEO of which wrote a guest blog on Energy-storage.news](#) last year.” —Cameron Murray, *Energy Storage News*, May 9, 2022

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

NCCAkron Receives \$20K NEA Grant for Summer/Fall 2022 Projects

“The National Center for Choreography - Akron (NCCAkron) has been approved for a \$20,000 Grants for Arts Projects award from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in support of the recent Creative Administration Research National Summit Convening, a Technical Residency, and two Dancing Labs. NCCAkron joins 1,125 arts projects across America, totaling more than \$26.6 million, that were selected during this second round of fiscal year 2022 funding. NCCAkron is one of three dance organizations in Ohio to receive funding in this round, and the only arts organization in Akron to do so.”—NCCAkron, Jun. 27, 2022

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

Akron Children’s Hospital Ranked Among National Best by U.S. News & World Report

“When it comes to specialized pediatric care, Northeast Ohio hospitals rank among some of the nation’s best, according to the latest assessment by U.S. News & World Report.

Rainbow Babies and Children’s Hospital, Cleveland Clinic Children’s Hospital, and Akron Children’s Hospital have all been ranked in the top 50 in one or more pediatric specialties in the report’s 2022/2023 issue.” —Gretchen Cuda Kroen, *Cleveland.com*, June 14, 2022

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



NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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. Whether it's an office job or service position, full or part time, we want this page to become a go-to source for those interested in working downtown. [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.

5 Lessons from Inspirational Public Space Efforts in Akron

"Earlier this month, the Civic Commons Learning Network hosted a multi-day learning journey to Akron, Ohio, to better understand what this city in Northeast Ohio had learned from six years as a Civic Commons demonstration city. Over 2.5 days we delved deep on the Akron Civic Commons model and talked with more than 30 community leaders and residents making change happen, together.

When a coalition of community leaders began reimagining their civic commons in 2016, they were ready to do things differently. Six years later, the story of Akron provides insight and inspiration. By breaking down silos, reconnecting neighborhoods and 'moving at the speed of trust,' Akron is paving the way for a more hopeful, equitable future." —*Reimagining the Civic Commons, Jun. 28, 2022*

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

BLU-Tique Hotel, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel, Opens in Historic Arts District

"The BLU-Tique Hotel in downtown Akron has reopened after being closed for almost all of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The owners and managers of the 71-room boutique hotel, located at Main and Market streets, on Thursday celebrated the reopening with a ribbon cutting. The hotel had been open just two months when it closed in March 2020 because of the pandemic.

The BLU-Tique includes an on-site restaurant and lounge, The 1 Food & Spirits. The 1 Food & Spirits features hand-crafted cocktails and small plates, flatbreads, salads and more from Executive Chef Frank Zifer." —*Akron Beacon Journal, Jun. 14, 2022*

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

Full Grip Games Among the 8 Best Sites to Buy Pokémon Online

"On Full Grip, you can find Pokemon, Magic, and Digimon, as well as accessories like deck boxes and sleeves. You can find both single and sealed card packs for each game. There is a huge amount of offerings for Pokemon cards on this site, from some of the first base sets to the newest editions.

Full Grip also has a wide selection of single card offerings for Magic the Gathering, including stand-alone, special edition, and promo cards." —*Kayla Dube, online-tech-tips.com, Mar. 2, 2022*

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

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Big Mamma's Burritos brings 'melting pot of American burritos' to downtown Akron

"When asked to describe the food Big Mamma's Burritos serves, just two words came to owner and operator John D'Andrea's mind: 'the best.'"

The new quick-serve burrito restaurant opened May 7 in downtown Akron and hopes to bring something different with its burritos, made in just 34 seconds."—*Shannon Coan, Akron Beacon Journal, Jun. 23, 2022*

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

Downtown Akron's Cascade Plaza: Then and Now

"If you've been to Cascade Plaza recently, you've probably noticed: it's beautiful! This summer, downtown organizations—with funding from the Knight Foundation—worked with Groundswell Design Group to come up with a plan for Cascade Plaza that included adding large, blue bench swings, chess tables for the community to enjoy both during scheduled chess tournaments and on an everyday basis, new adirondack chairs, planters in varying shades of blue and teal filled with pollinator friendly, perennial flowers, and additional artistic enhancements.

The goal is to pull more color, plant life, and vibrancy into the plaza so that in turn, more people will be drawn to it as a fun, comfortable, bustling space. We've already seen countless people enjoying these new upgrades during Skate Nights, free fitness classes, and on afternoons or evenings after a meal or during a walk downtown."

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



BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS



BOUNCE ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD CHAIR, DIRECTOR CHANGES

"Bounce Innovation Hub announces several changes to its board of directors, effective Jan. 1. Hans Dorfi, senior vice president of engineering at Bridgestone Americas, has been named chair after serving as a member for two years. Dorfi replaces founding chairperson, Deborah Hoover, president and CEO of the Burton D. Morgan Foundation, who will remain as a member of the Bounce board." [Find out more.](#)

CEO DOUG WEINTRAUB TO RETIRE; COO JESSICA SUBLETT NAMED SUCCESSOR

"Bounce Innovation Hub has announced that Douglas Weintraub, chief executive officer, will retire at the end of 2022. The board of directors has appointed Jessica Sublett, chief operating officer, to succeed Weintraub as CEO on Jan. 1, 2023.

"On behalf of the board of directors and the Bounce team, clients and members, we want to thank Doug for his leadership as Bounce's first chief executive officer," said Hans Dorfi, chair, Bounce board of directors." [Find out more.](#)

TORCHBEARERS RECOGNIZES AWARD WINNERS

"Torchbearers recognized Theresa Carter as the Read Family Friend of Young Leaders Award winner and Kimberly Young as the Distinguished Alumni Award winner March 15 at the John S. Knight Center.

Carter is president of Synthomer Foundation, which in 2021 provided \$1.3 million in support to educational initiatives, civic investments, health and human services, and the arts. She serves on a number of nonprofit community boards, advisory councils and committees." [Find out more.](#)

CUYAHOGA VALLEY SCENIC RAILROAD CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY

"The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, one of Northeast Ohio's moving treasures that celebrates and preserves the remnants of the steam railroad era, is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Founded in 1972 by Siegfried Buerling, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad operates through the Cuyahoga Valley National Park over what was once the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

Since its creation, the CVSR has offered train rides through the park and welcomes more than 170,000 visitors a year from all 50 states, and even visitors from Europe and Central America." [Find out more.](#)



BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

JUSTIN HILTON CHOSEN AS PRESIDENT OF LEADERSHIP AKRON

The Leadership Akron Board of Directors is excited to announce that it has appointed Justin Everett Hilton as the President of Leadership Akron. Justin will join the team on June 15, 2022, bringing with him nearly 30 years of business and community leadership experience. [Find out more.](#)

ARTSNOW: ARTS & CULTURE PATRONS - HEATHER MEEKER

"Heather Meeker (Executive Director, Summit Artspace) is a results-driven nonprofit leader with a passion for achieving organizational vision in the arts, culture, and education fields. Her expertise includes strategic planning, team-building, partnerships, project management, relationship-based fundraising, external affairs, and financial oversight. Heather specializes in creating artist-centered, artist-led initiatives as well as arts education partnerships." [Find out more.](#)

THE COOLEST HIDDEN BARS YOU MUST VISIT IN OHIO INCLUDE NORTHSIDE SPEAKEASY

"Located inside the basement [sic] of the Marriott Hotel in downtown Akron, this sophisticated speakeasy is designed to make patrons feel as if they're back in the year 1920." [Find out more.](#)

METRO RTA WELCOMES TATIA HARRIS AS NEW CHIEF CULTURE OFFICER

"Tatia Harris has been hired as METRO RTA's Chief Culture Officer. The position was created to further enhance, adapt, and solidify culture within the workplace. Harris will be responsible for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, as well as training, planning, and fostering an equitable, sustainable culture and forging productive partnerships.

Harris most recently served as the Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the City of Knoxville, Tennessee, overseeing an internal equity committee that works to create and sustain a culture of inclusiveness, respect, acceptance, and empowerment." [Find out more.](#)

2022 BERT A. POLSKY HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENTS: STEVE AND JEANNINE MARKS

"Akron Marathon founders and civic visionaries Steve and Jeannine Marks are the 2022 recipients of Akron Community Foundation's Bert A. Polsky Humanitarian Award.

Since founding the Akron Marathon in 2003, Steve and Jeannine have grown the race into a world-class event that has generated \$133 million in economic impact for the Greater Akron community, celebrated more than 170,000 finishers, and raised \$6 million for local charities. The race, which celebrates its 20 anniversary in 2022, attracts 100,000 spectators each year and is the largest five-person marathon relay event in the United States." [Find out more.](#)



TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT

FEATURED PROPERTY

354 S. Main St. | 1st Floor Retail

Located on Main Street in the heart of Downtown Akron, this storefront offers exterior fascade signage and patio seating options. Storefronts in this intersection are primed for foot traffic. 2,784 SF, 2 Floors



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

FEATURED BUSINESS

Velvet Vintage Boutique 335 S. Main St.

Velvet Vintage is a Boutique that sells unique hand-picked Vintage Designer Fashion and Home Décor. Art Deco, Y2k, French Victorian, Dark Rich Velvet and Stunning Silk, are just some of the styles they offer for purchase.

Open Thursday - Sunday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. or by appointment.



METRO RTA OFFERS FARE-FREE WEEKENDS ALL SUMMER LONG

METRO celebrated summer with fare-free weekends every Saturday and Sunday in June, July, and August. Free rides applied on all METRO fixed-routes and ADA services.

"The past two years have been challenging for many people," said Director of PR & Marketing Molly Becker. "The suspension of weekend fares allows METRO to give back to its core riders and encourages people to enjoy the many events taking place across Summit County this summer." [Click here to read the full story.](#)

COME DRIVE WITH (B)US HIRING EVENT ATTRACTS 99 APPLICANTS

On Saturday, August 6, from 9 a.m. to noon, in partnership with Stark State College Akron, Akron METRO RTA hosted a hiring event geared toward bus operators to showcase bus operator positions and the benefits of working at



METRO by providing applicants the opportunity to test-drive one of the buses used daily on METRO routes.

"We want to show the public that METRO is not only a viable career, but a very sustainable and advantageous career at that," said METRO CEO Dawn Distler.

For those still wishing to apply, click here to [find out more.](#)

METRO RTA PASSENGERS WIN AKRON URBAN LEAGUE'S COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD

The annual nominations allow for community members to receive recognition for making a difference in Summit County. METRO RTA was proud beyond measure to nominate a group of persons who kept the community moving through the numerous challenges of the pandemic—their riders.

"We recognize that safe, accessible, reliable, and equitable transportation is necessary for our riders to get where they need to keep our community thriving and moving forward," said METRO CEO Dawn Distler. "It's a privilege to provide essential services to essential people. Thank you for your trust in us, it does not go unnoticed." [Find out more.](#)

SUPPORTING DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

11 Ways to Support Downtown Akron Businesses

Supporting downtown businesses is essential for building community and strengthening the local economy. Downtown small business owners are our friends, family, and neighbors. Here are 11 easy-to-implement ideas for supporting them:

1. Choose local

It's always best to choose locally owned [shops](#) and [eateries](#). [Here's a list](#) of downtown Akron businesses.

2. Support local businesses online

Many downtown shops and restaurants have options for on-line shopping and ordering—whether through their websites directly or through delivery services.

3. Choose downtown restaurants for catering orders

Planning on catering a work meeting, lunch, or event? Look for the “C” notation on our [Food Guide](#) to find your next caterer.

4. Buy gift cards

The perfect gift for family, friends, and even future you.

5. Rent a downtown space

The next time you plan a party, presentation, or business meeting, choose to have it in a downtown venue.

6. Leave reviews

If you love a downtown business, tell the internet! Your 5-star reviews can go a long way in encouraging others to patronize the business, too.

7. Tell your friends and family

If you love a downtown business, tell the people in your life. Positive word of mouth can really make a difference for local businesses.

8. Share businesses' social media posts

Helping downtown businesses spread the word about their goods, services, and promotions is a great way to support them even when funds are tight.

9. Give social media shoutouts to downtown businesses

Take a photo of your food, shopping experience, or other downtown adventure, and post it to your own social media accounts. Be sure to tag the business(es) and use #DowntownAkron!

10. Choose Akron first

Spending your evenings and weekends enjoying experiences, eateries, and festivals in downtown Akron makes a huge difference, and dispels the myth that there's nothing to do here.

11. Say thank you

Let small businesses owners know how much you genuinely appreciate them and their business. It doesn't cost a thing to be sweet.





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#Downtownakron

