

DOWNTOWN AKRON QUARTERLY UPDATE

AKRON DESIGNATED AS TECH HUB
FOR SUSTAINABLE POLYMER DEVELOPMENT



4TH QUARTER 2023

DOWNTOWN AKRON SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

IN THIS ISSUE

What to See

Downtown Small Businesses and Storefronts in the News

- [Circle of 5ths is Newest Restaurant in Downtown Akron](#)
- [Plannerz Place Eatery Eyes January Opening](#)
- [New Nonprofit Newsroom Signal Akron Launches](#)

Residential and Business Development Dashboard

October - December Marquee Events

- [2nd Annual Downtown Akron Fall Fest](#)
- [Smells Like Snow Coffee Festival](#)
- [Welcome Santa Illuminated Night Parade & Holiday Tree Lighting](#)

Clean, Safe & Welcoming: Ambassador Accomplishments

Marketing and Promotions Dashboard

5 NEW DOWNTOWN GUIDES & STORIES

Vibrancy and Economic Development

- [Akron Gets Tech Hub Federal Designation](#)
- [Still Bullish on Downtown Despite Surplus Office Space](#)
- [Mayor Malik's Plans Include Residential Expansion in Downtown](#)
- [\\$40M Redevelopment for Polsky Building](#)
- [Developer Tony Troppe Plans More for Historic Arts District](#)
- [A Lot of Space to Grow: Post Pandemic Hopes for Downtown](#)
- [Report & Recommendations for the Decommissioned Innerbelt](#)
- [Cleveland Clinic Akron General gets \\$500K for Substance Use Disorder Program](#)
- [J.M. Smucker Co. Gives \\$1M to Akron Children's Hospital for Reading Program](#)
- [Lock 3 Updates #1 and #2](#)
- [Plans for Former Beacon Journal Building: Living, Offices, Retail](#)
- [UA Grant Waives 1st-Year Tuition Costs for Low-Income Students](#)
- [Accessibility Library Resources for More Inclusive Events](#)
- [Akron Municipal Court Moves to Ocasek Building](#)
- [UA Students Launch "Zips Guide to Shopping Small in Akron"](#)
- [Akron Soul Train Announces 8th Year of Artist Residencies](#)
- [GAR Foundation Awards \\$1.75M to Akron Nonprofits in Nov.](#)
- [Akron Community Foundation Awards \\$4.3M in Quarterly Grants](#)
- [Burton D. Morgan Foundation Awards \\$1.7M to NEO Groups](#)
- [The 3rd Edition of Akron on Deck Art Cards is Coming](#)
- [Knight Foundation Art + Tech Fund to Award \\$250K in Grants](#)
- [Downtown Akron Partnership Launches E-Gift Card](#)
- [ArtsNow Announces \\$450K in Summit County Arts Grants](#)
- [Akron Civic Commons 2.0 Announces \\$1M Gift for Lock 3 Park](#)

Business Achievements and News

Featured Property

- [The Standard, Retail Storefronts](#)

Featured Business

- [DeJuan's Downtown Akron](#)

Transportation and Development

- [METRO RTA Breaks Ground on New Maintenance Facility](#)

ICYMI: In Case You Missed It & Breaking News

- [Mayor Horrigan Unveils New City Website](#)
- [Mayor & Police Chief Launch Safe Place Program](#)
- [63rd Mayor of Akron, Shammias Malik, Ready to Lead](#)

Save the Date: DAP 2024 Event Poster Series



6,000:
VISITORS TO FALL FEST
& SMELLS LIKE SNOW
COFFEE FESTIVAL, pg 6



DOWNTOWN AKRON, 4TH QUARTER 2023

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



5:
**NEW DOWNTOWN
GUIDES & STORIES,**
pg 9



115:
**DAP BUSINESS
CONTACTS
MADE IN Q3,**
pg 5



**“WE’RE STILL
BULLISH ON
DOWNTOWN,
AND THAT’S
WHY WE’RE
MOVING
FORWARD
AS FAST AS
WE CAN ON
CITICENTRE.”**

**—PRESIDENT & CEO
OF WELTY BUILDING
COMPANY, DON
TAYLOR, pg 10**



YOUR DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORS

Downtown Small Businesses and Storefronts in the News

Circle of 5ths is newest restaurant in downtown Akron with cocktails, small plates, by Kerry Clawson, Akron Beacon Journal: The Circle of 5ths is the newest eatery and bar to grace downtown Akron's historical arts district.

The 50-seat restaurant, which focuses on classic cocktails and small plates, is located above BLU Jazz+ at 45 E. Market St., where BLU Plate used to be.

Our goal for this place is to have kind of like a metropolitan vibe with not a metropolitan price

Business partners are mixologist Ryan Austin, chef Ian Lotz and Mike Troppe, son of downtown developer/business owner Tony Troppe, who's general manager at BLU Jazz+ and owner of High Street Hop House around the corner.

Austin named the establishment Circle of 5ths in reference to a music theory term, in homage to the jazz club downstairs. A double meaning also refers to the owners' favorite spirits being measured in fifth gallons.

On its Facebook page, the restaurant proclaims it's the place for "stiff drinks and small plates."

Small plates at this restaurant include hummus with pickled veggies and warm pita, a charcuterie board, seasoned fries with house made French onion dip, and chicken fritters battered in a gluten-free corn and rice coating served with fingerling-shaped hush puppies. [READ MORE](#)

The Plannerz Place Eatery eyes January opening for restaurant at Akron's Northside Marketplace, by Megan Becka, Cleveland.com: If Thanksgiving preparations and clean-up have left you looking for



SIGNAL
AKRON



Susan Kirkman Zake
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

an escape from the kitchen, take note: The Plannerz Place is open for your meal prep, catering and holiday meal needs.

Started by Akron resident Tonya Essick and her daughters WyTerria Thornton and Carolyn Clay in 2019, The Plannerz Place will soon expand its food capabilities by opening an eatery at Akron's Northside Marketplace, at 21 Furnace St.

I love cooking and I love to eat. It just comes naturally to me.

The business is currently finishing construction of the space, which is slated to open in January. Like The Plannerz Place, The Plannerz Place Eatery will specialize in offering Southern-style soul food for dine in or carryout.

"I've always been in the kitchen," Essick said. "I love cooking and I love to eat. It just comes naturally to me. My dad had been a cook, and when I was 6 years old, he put me in the kitchen. I started cooking breakfast foods, and I don't know if I liked the attention or what, but soon my dad would put me up against anyone for cooking." [READ MORE](#)

New Nonprofit Newsroom Signal Akron Launches, by Mark Oprea, Cleveland. Scene: Today, the city of Akron's media industry grows a bit stronger.

Signal Akron, the sophomore newsroom from Signal Ohio—a network of independent, community-oriented media outlets across the state backed by local and national funders that last year launched Signal Cleveland—begins publishing.

The digital news site will begin its new reporting venture out of offices at 159 South Main St., nestled in between City Hall and the Akron Civic Theatre with six reporters and editors covering government, education, health, public safety, business and the arts. It will eventually grow to 11 full-time employees, including editor-in-chief Susan Zake. [READ MORE](#)

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Modern Traditions Co.



Q4 New Downtown Businesses

The Circle of 5ths • 45 E. Market St.

Modern Traditions • 21 Furnace St.
modtradco.com

United States Potato Service • 209 S. Main St.
unitedstatespotatoservice.com



Business Development Office Occupancy

	OCCUPANCY RATE	AVG ASKING RATE (PER SQ. FT.)
H1 - 2023	84.7%	\$19.73
H2 - 2022	85.5%	\$18.32
H1 - 2022	85.7%	\$17.26
H2 - 2021	81.2%	\$16.77

*Data from CBRE



Residential Development as of Q4 - 2023

90% Residential Occupancy



Hospitality | Summit County

HOTEL PERFORMANCE JANUARY - NOVEMBER 2023

	OCCUPANCY	AVERAGE DAILY RATE	RevPAR†
SUMMIT COUNTY	57.9%	\$104.42	\$60.41
OHIO	59.0%	\$118.29	\$69.78
HOTEL PERFORMANCE 2022			
SUMMIT COUNTY	59.7%	\$96.66	\$57.74
OHIO	57.7%	\$112.02	\$64.60
HOTEL PERFORMANCE 2021			
SUMMIT COUNTY	55.4%	\$85.04	\$47.10
OHIO	52.7%	\$98.74	\$52.07

*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

	Q4 - 2023	CONTACTS MADE*
RETAIL BUSINESS CONTACTS		72
NON-RETAIL BUSINESS CONTACTS		37
RETAIL AND BUSINESS PROSPECTS**		37

* 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

OCTOBER – DECEMBER EVENTS



Downtown Akron Fall Fest

Nov. 7, 2023, by DAP Staff

Saturday, October 21, brought roughly 1,500 visitors to Main Street and Cascade Plaza for an evening of spooky, festive, family-friendly fun. Moms, dads, kids, aunts, uncles, friends, and neighbors all gathered—most of them in costume—and collected candy, mingled with witches and warlocks, and celebrated the fall season.

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

Smells Like Snow Coffee Festival

Nov. 16, 2023, by DAP Staff

Where we led, 4,500 Gilmore Girls fans followed—that is, straight to Cascade Plaza on Main Street in downtown Akron, where people from at least 8 US states enjoyed the wandering musical stylings of town troubadours, had their fortunes told by Doggy Swami, watched silent films at the Black-White-Read Bookstore, sampled all the caffeinated beverages their hearts desired, and even got to play rock-paper-scissors with an actor from their favorite show.

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



Welcome Santa Illuminated Night Parade and Holiday Tree Lighting

Nov. 24, 2023, by Akron Beacon Journal Staff

The 36th annual Welcome Santa Holiday Parade took place Friday in downtown Akron. For the second time in the parade's 36-year history, the parade was a nighttime affair, stepping off at 6 p.m.

The illuminated parade featured community groups, arts and cultural organizations, marching bands, drum lines, businesses participating with lighted floats, vehicles and costumes—and an appearance from Santa, of course.

The parade stepped off from South Main Street at Cedar Street and traveled north a half mile on South Main Street, ending at Bowery Street. Immediately following the parade, the city hosted Lock 3's annual tree lighting ceremony and fireworks, courtesy of the Downtown Akron Partnership.

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



DOWNTOWN PROGRAMS



CLEAN, SAFE & WELCOMING

DAP Ambassador Stats Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2023

6,066

TRASH COLLECTED (LBS)

590

BUS STOPS
CLEANED

100

SCOOTER
SUPPORT

256

BUSINESS CONTACTS
MADE

551

BUSINESS
CHECKS

16

WEED
ABATEMENT
(BLOCK FACES)

48

GRAFFITI
REMOVED

328

SKYWALK
PATROL

113

PARKING
ASSISTANCE

924

SECURITY
CHECKS

7

SAFETY
ESCORTS

22

MOTORIST
ASSISTANCE

2,735

HOSPITALITY ASSISTANCE



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.](#)

In October, ambassador Kaleb Dlugoleski (pictured, lower left) was featured by Akron METRO RTA's social media page, Summit Stories, which shares the stories of people who interact with METRO. [View the feature here.](#)

"They are excellent and always helpful and friendly"

"They are awesome—sunshine or snow, very helpful and positive"

"See the team around everywhere. They are friendly, helpful, and engaging."

—recent comments about downtown Akron Ambassadors from the DAP General Survey and social media



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	Q3 - 2023	Q4 - 2023
FACEBOOK	13,067	13,254
TWITTER	9,439	9,412
INSTAGRAM	8,028	8,398
LINKEDIN	2,538	2,638

WEBSITE TRAFFIC	Q3 - 2023	Q4 - 2023
USERS	88,236	84,112
SESSIONS	118,022	109,963
UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS	182,795	187,794

EMAIL NEWSLETTER	Q4 - 2023
NUMBER PUBLISHED	27
SENDS	206,839
OPENS	63,709
CLICKS	4,257
SUBSCRIBERS	19,041

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.



NEW Downtown Guides & Stories

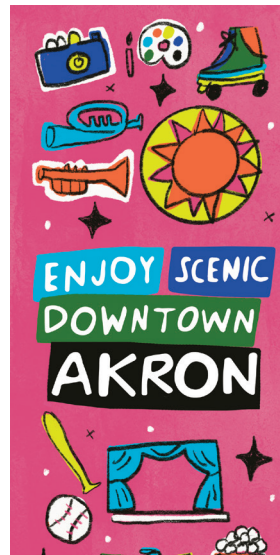
We'll do the planning, you make the memories. DAP's growing list of downtown Guides can help you make a day of it in downtown Akron. *(click each to read)*

Guides

- [Things to Do This Fall in Downtown Akron](#)
- [Downtown Akron Shopping Guide](#)
- [11 Downtown Akron Coffee Shops](#)

Stories

- [1,500 Visitors Attend the 2nd Annual Downtown Akron Fall Fest](#)
- [2023 Smells Like Snow Coffee Festival Brings Fans of Gilmore Girls & Local Coffee from Near & Far](#)

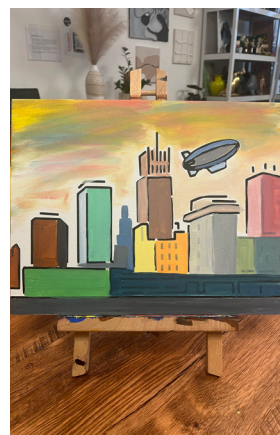


Enjoy Scenic Downtown Akron

The 4th and final phase of the Enjoy Scenic Downtown Akron passport program has been completed!

We thank all of the people who participated throughout 2023. You helped support locally-owned businesses in downtown Akron all year.

The winner of the 4th phase of the program was Sheralyn Graise! She received a special guided painting workshop at Street Craftery for up to 4 people. Instructors at Street Craftery will lead the party in the creation of a gorgeous downtown Akron landscape, like the one pictured. Additional prizes included gift cards to Cilantro Thai & Sushi, Lepley & Co., and the Downtown Akron Dollars E-Gift Card (along with a super-cool Lovely Akron t-shirt).



Look for new, fun downtown Akron promotions in 2024.

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Akron gets White House designation as tech hub for sustainable polymer development

President Joe Biden and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo designated Akron one of 31 “Regional Innovation and Technology Hubs” that will be eligible for hefty federal grants funded from a \$10 billion chunk of money from last year’s CHIPS and Science Act.

White House officials said that for too long economic growth and opportunity has clustered in a few cities on the nation’s east and west coasts. They said the tech hubs located throughout the country will catalyze investment in technologies critical to economic growth, national security, and job creation, and will help communities across the country become centers of innovation critical to American competitiveness.

The Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub led by the Greater Akron Chamber will try to address the severe climate and environmental impacts resulting from the use of fossil fuel-derived polymers (rubbers and plastics) through accelerating U.S. sustainable polymer manufacturing and commercialization. —*Sabrina Eaton, Cleveland.com, Oct. 23, 2023*

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

Akron aims to bounce back, using its rubber and plastics history

Leaders say Greater Akron could soon drive a tidal wave of innovation spurred by millions of dollars in new state and federal investments aimed at helping local businesses and research institutes compete globally.

The government funding targets areas of Ohio and the country where existing science and industry expertise has largely been overlooked by the tech revolution that’s been a boon to many cities on the U.S. coasts.

The polymer cluster is now working on its first federal hub funding application and narrowing down projects, which must focus on sustainable rubber and plastics. The application for as much as \$75 million in federal funding is due in February, with winners announced over the summer.—*Amanda Garrett, Akron Beacon Journal, Dec. 14, 2023*

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

Still bullish on downtown despite surplus of office space

Market research five years ago called for more apartments downtown even before the shift to remote work walloped demand for office space. Today, apartments are still leasing fast despite an unprecedented level of recent development.

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Developers like Tony Troppe have added new studios and lofts in commercial buildings. Three buildings reopened since 2021—The Landmark, The Goodrich and 159 Main in the former Law Building—offer 340 new apartments and sometimes waiting lists to get in them.

“We’re still bullish on downtown, and that’s why we’re moving forward as fast as we can on CitiCentre,” Don Taylor, president and CEO of Welty Building Company, said of reviving the plan for apartments in the old YWCA Building.—*Doug Livingston, Akron Beacon Journal, Dec. 7, 2023*

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

Mayor Malik’s plans include residential expansion in downtown

Top city officials, including outgoing Mayor Dan Horrigan, have expressed concern about the financial impact of the shift to remote work, given the city’s investments in Downtown in the last several decades.

Shammas Malik’s outlook, on the other hand, is not as “doom and gloom,” according to the city’s next mayor.

“We certainly are facing that challenge, but I think that at the end of the day, we have opportunity,” Malik said.

While demand for commercial space has declined, the city has seen a surge in residents wanting to move Downtown in recent years, Malik said.

In his first term, he wants to focus on making Downtown a better place to live to in turn help it become a more attractive place to work.—*Anna Huntsman, Ideastream Public Media, Dec. 26, 2023*

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

Akron’s Polsky Building looks to boost downtown with \$40 million redevelopment

Akron’s former director of planning and urban development, Jason Segedy, said he has begun to get his arms around his huge task of redeveloping the University of Akron’s Polsky building in downtown Akron.

It’s a project that could effectively make him the biggest developer in downtown Akron, given the size of the building and the extent of the overhaul the university is planning.

“It’s 427,000 square feet,” Segedy said. “It’s between three and four Walmarts in size—it’s really big!”—*Dan Shingler, Crain’s Cleveland Business, Oct. 23, 2023*

[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.](#)

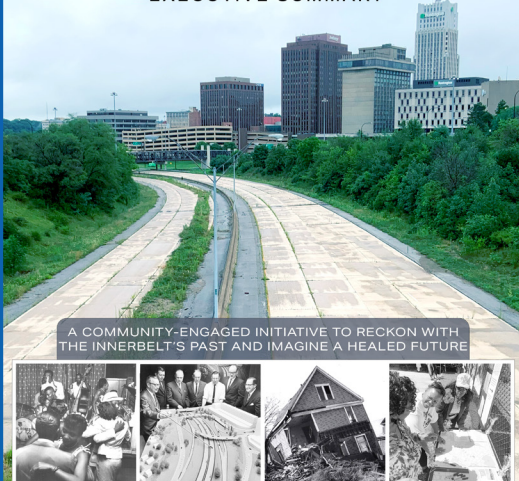
TO UPDATE YOUR COMPANY PROFILE,
PROVIDE A PHOTO
OR TO LIST A JOB OPENING,
PLEASE EMAIL [INFO@DOWNTOWNAKRON.COM](mailto:info@downtownakron.com).

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



RECONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY PHASE 1 REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A COMMUNITY-ENGAGED INITIATIVE TO RECKON WITH
THE INNERBELT'S PAST AND IMAGINE A HEALED FUTURE

Developer Tony Troppe plans to inject more life into downtown Akron

Developer Tony Troppe is not done building out Akron's arts and entertainment district along Market Street east of Main Street, or what Troppe likes to call, "the Blu Zone," after his Blu Jazz+ club and BLU-tique hotel there.

Troppe recently has been showing city officials and others his early plans to bring 25 residences, a jazz and R&B music venue, restaurant and outdoor seating and gathering places to the downtown district.

It all would be in and around the three-story Castle Hall building that Troppe owns and in a new six-story building he plans to build next door.—*Dan Shingler, Crain's Cleveland Business, Oct. 19, 2023*

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

'A lot of space to grow': downtown residents, investors share post pandemic hopes

"I think that there are a lot of players around the table that are doing a lot of good work downtown and I think a lot of residents are beginning to see that we can change and we can move in a positive direction and we can make this neighborhood a place where people can thrive," [Bronlynn] Thurman said.—*Anthony Thompson, Akron Beacon Journal, Dec. 7, 2023*

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

Akron releases report, recommendations on next steps for decommissioned Innerbelt

Akron has released a report and recommendations on the history and future of the Innerbelt. The report, titled "Reconnecting Our Community Phase 1 Innerbelt Report," includes the history of the Innerbelt, the community engagement work from the Reconnecting Our Community initiative and recommendations for short and long term opportunities, according to a press release from the city.—*Abigail Bottar, Ideastream Public Media, Dec. 4, 2023.*

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

Cleveland Clinic Akron General gets \$500,000 for substance use disorder program

Cleveland Clinic Akron General is receiving \$500,000 from Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and the

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

county council to continue providing access to individuals struggling with substance use disorder.

The hospital's program, Recovery's in Reach, offers immediate access to help to patients with substance use disorders at the Akron hospital's four emergency departments. This includes matching the patient with a recovery coach and having them see a registered nurse with experience in addiction services.—*Paige Bennett, Crain's Cleveland Business, Oct. 18, 2023*

[Click here to view the list of grant recipients.](#)

J.M. Smucker Co. donates \$1M to Akron Children's Hospital to establish Berry Good Reading Program

Akron Children's Hospital on Thursday announced it received a \$1 million gift from the J.M. Smucker Co. to create the Berry Good Reading Program.

The program aims to improve literacy among children ages 6 months through 5 years by providing them with an age-appropriate book each year during their well-child visit.—*Megan Becka, Cleveland.com, Dec. 7, 2023*

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

Lock 3 Park Updates #1 and 2

During the 4th quarter 2023, Akron Civic Commons released two "hard hat" video updates from Dan Rice, president and CEO of The Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, regarding the ongoing 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 #1, November 21, 2023](#)

[View Update #2, December 18, 2023](#)

New plans for former Beacon Journal building include apartments, offices, retail

The former longtime home of the Akron Beacon Journal is slated to become a mixed-use building with nearly 200 apartment units, along with office, retail space and restaurants, according to state records.

The project, which was approved for \$5.3 million in Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits this month, would transform an entire city block between downtown and the University of Akron that's been vacant since 2019, when the Akron Beacon Journal moved to a smaller and more modern space two blocks away in the AES building. —*Amanda, Garrett, Akron Beacon Journal, Dec. 28, 2023*

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



NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



New UA grant will waive first-year tuition costs for local low-income students

The University of Akron announced a new grant designed to make higher education more accessible for local students.

The Making Akron Possible (MAP) Grant will cover the full tuition and general fees for first-year students from Summit, Stark, Medina, Portage, Cuyahoga and Wayne counties whose total family adjusted gross income is \$50,000 or less as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).—*Derek Kreider, Akron Beacon Journal, Nov. 14, 2023*

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

The Accessibility Library offers resources to make your events more inclusive

Looking to plan an event? First consider a visit to the the Akron-Summit County Public Library location in downtown Akron for ideas on making the event more accessible and inclusive.

The Akron-Summit County Public Library—along with Advancing Independence Network, ArtsNow, Direction Home Akron Canton, and Summit DD—recently announced the opening of the Accessibility Library. The Accessibility Library is a resource center dedicated to enhancing accessibility at festivals, performances, community gatherings and cultural shows. The library is provided at no cost.—*April Helms, Akron Beacon Journal, Dec. 27, 2023*

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

Akron Municipal Court gets new location

After years of calling attention to its deteriorating courthouse building, Akron officials unveiled the new location of the Akron Municipal Court Thursday.

The court moved to the newly renovated Oliver Ocasek Building on Broadway Street in Downtown Akron—just around the corner from its current location in the Harold Stubbs Justice Center.

In a ribbon-cutting event, Mayor Dan Horrigan said the project has been in the works for years.—*Anna Huntsman, Ideastream Public Media, Nov. 7, 2023*

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

University of Akron Students Launch 'Zips Guide to Shopping Small & Local in Akron'

University of Akron students launched the 'Zips Guide to Shopping Small & Local in Akron' for Small Business Saturday and Artist Sunday. The guide offers in-depth features on small businesses and artists in downtown Akron, with an emphasis on creative gifting ideas and gifts



A Zips Guide to Shopping Small & Local In Akron



Media outlets have permission to use the content of this site like a news release. [Expand to learn more ->](#)

[Gift Downtown Dollars](#)

[Gift Northside Marketplace](#)

[Gift a Night Out in Akron](#)

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

that make an impact. The guide is also intended to be used as a resource for media.

The features in the shopping guide were written by University of Akron students, who explored downtown's small business and artist scene as part of their community-engaged Public Relations Writing course. The assignment was intended to help them practice interviewing and story development skills. It is part of a larger community partnership between the course and Downtown Akron Partnership."—*UA Public Relations Writing Class Press Release, Nov. 22, 2023*

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

Akron Soul Train unveils 8th year of artist residencies

Fifteen Northeast Ohio artists, working in many different media, will be featured in the 2024 Akron Soul Train residency program, the organization announced.

The Downtown-based arts program started in 2016 to "provide financial support and administrative support to artists to complete an exhibition or performance," said Executive Director Pita Brooks. The residency culminates in a community-based program.—*Kabir Bhatia, Ideastream Public Media, Dec. 27, 2023*

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

GAR Foundation Awards Nearly \$1.75M to Akron-Area Nonprofits in November

Inclusive economic development was a prominent theme in the nearly \$1.75 million of grants approved by GAR Foundation at its November distribution meeting. Most notably, the Foundation awarded support to three organizations that participate in the Elevate Greater Akron (EGA) collaborative: \$100,000 to the Greater Akron Chamber for continuing to lead the EGA agenda and communications; \$100,000 to Bounce Innovation Hub for its work on entrepreneurship; and \$100,000 to Western Reserve Community Fund for the capital programs it offers to support businesses in Akron.—*GAR Foundation News Release, Nov. 30, 2023*

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

Akron Community Foundation awards \$4.3M in quarterly grants

Akron Community Foundation awarded \$4.3 million in grants during its past quarter, with its board approving \$755,000 to 68 nonprofits in competitive health and human service grants. The foundation also awarded \$40,000 in grants that impact two of the foundation's six proactive priorities – mental health and the aging senior population.

Among the nonprofits funded this quarter is Love Akron, which was awarded \$16,000 to support mental health



NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



and wellness programming for Akron Public Schools students, including the Locker Room Experience, which helps mentor and empower high schoolers. According to Love Akron, the program has yielded increased school attendance for participating students, and decreased violence and vandalism.—*Akron Community Foundation News Release, Dec. 4, 2023*

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

Burton D. Morgan Foundation awards over \$1.7M to Northeast Ohio groups

The Burton D. Morgan Foundation has awarded more than \$1.7 million since June to nonprofit groups in Northeast Ohio.

Growth Opportunity Partners topped the list with a \$1 million grant to create a fund over three years that “aims to foster equitable economic growth in underserved Ohio communities by offering credit enhancement through cash collateral loan guarantees.”

The foundation also awarded grants to the following benefit entrepreneurs:

- Downtown Akron Partnership: \$20,000 to support the Start Downtown program.
- Ideastream Public Media: \$70,000 to support regional business storytelling efforts.
- University of Akron Research Foundation: \$50,000 to support the STRIDE Accelerator.—*Akron Beacon Journal, Oct. 24, 2023*

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

Akron artists, retailers, getting 3rd dose of Love

The city’s Art X Love creative agency is putting together its third, not quite annual, Akron on Deck project, which produces decks of playing cards featuring the works of local artists.

The project started in 2020, when agency co-founder Mac Love took work from local artists and produced a deck of playing cards that he sold through downtown retailers and arts-oriented businesses and organizations around town.

So far, Love and his contributors have sold 11,000 decks from the first two editions. That raised \$88,000 for the arts in Akron, including \$33,000 for local retailers and \$55,000 that went to local artists as royalty payments.—*Dan Shingler, Crain’s Cleveland Business, Dec. 29, 2023*

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

New Knight Foundation initiative to award grants totaling \$250,000 to Akron-based artists, arts organizations

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation is awarding Akron-based artists, arts collectives and arts organizations up

NEWS: VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

to \$25,000 or up to \$100,000, respectively, to broaden the reach of their work through the use of technology.

The new initiative, the Art + Tech Expansion Fund, is accepting applications. A total of \$250,000 will be given to increase digital integration in the arts.—*Megan Becka, Cleveland.com, Oct. 25, 2023*

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

Downtown Akron Partnership Launches E-Gift Card

The Downtown Akron Dollars E-Gift Card launched in December for the holiday shopping season and is available now for gift-giving throughout the year.

The e-gift cards work like regular gift cards, except that there's no plastic card to keep track of or lose. Because it is digital, the e-gift cards can live on your phone and the total updates each time you use it, so you always know how much you've spent. Another plus: you can use them at any of 23 (and counting) downtown Akron eateries, shops, and venues.

Discounts are available for bulk purchases as the e-gift cards make great employee rewards, holiday gifts, customer appreciation, welcome gifts, promotions, incentives and more.

[Click here to find out more.](#)

\$450,000 in Summit County arts grants announced

Angry cows, ghosts and bipolar butterflies are the names of just some of the projects being funded by Summit County's arts advocacy agency ArtsNow. The group announced about \$450,000 in grants on Tuesday to greater Akron arts and culture nonprofits and artists.

It's the first year for ArtsForward grants, which is guided by goals from the Akron/Summit Cultural Plan, including advocating for K-12 arts programming and encouraging investment in public art projects.

ArtsNow executive director Nicole Mullet said that matching funds from the Knight Foundation will allow them to award close to \$2 million over the next four years.

[Click here to find out more.](#)

Akron Civic Commons 2.0 Announces Major Gift for Lock 3 Park

The Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, in partnership with the City of Akron and residents of Akron, announced the donation of \$1 million from an Anonymous Donor for the redevelopment of Lock 3 Park in downtown Akron. With this generous contribution, Lock 3 Park has received over \$3.5 million in individual donations, in addition to funding from the City of Akron, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Akron Children's Hospital, Summit County Government, GAR Foundation and Akron Community Foundation.

[Click here to find out more.](#)



BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS



ANDREW HUSTED BECOMES PRESIDENT OF FULL SPECTRUM MARKETING

Andrew Husted, longtime Senior Vice President of Client Services at FSM, was promoted to president of the downtown Akron marketing agency where he has been employed since its founding in 2015.

"I'm excited to lead the organization that I have come to know and love so well," said Husted, who joined Full Spectrum Marketing around the same time as [previous president, Josh] Gordon in 2015, the agency's first year. [Find out more.](#)

UA PROF LEADS TEAM DIGGING INTO CLUES ABOUT LIFE IN MIDDLE EAST 2,500 YEARS AGO

[Timothy] Matney, a professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Akron, recently scored a big win in the world of archaeology, signing a deal with authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan to excavate seven sites.

He's leading a team of archaeologists from around the world, looking for remnants of daily life from small villages left behind more than 2,500 years ago. [Find out more.](#)



GPD GROUP WINS PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARD FROM OHIO CONCRETE FOR CEDAR POINT PROJECT

The Boardwalk, a newly themed area near the shoreline, introduces a host of new dining, rides, and entertainment attractions. This addition pays tribute to Cedar Point's rich history through a modern lens. [Find out more.](#)

THE NIGHTLIGHT RECEIVES SCIENCE ON SCREEN GRANT from Executive Director, Jenn Kidd:

"We are thrilled to announce that The Nightlight has been selected as a recipient of the 2023-24 @scienceonscreen grant from the Coolidge Corner Theatre and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Forty independent cinemas, museums, and community groups were chosen throughout the country to create and present three or more Science on Screen events, which pair expert-led discussions of scientific topics with screenings of feature and documentary films, and we couldn't be more excited to be included as the ONLY theater in Ohio!



Science on Screen features classic, cult, and documentary films provocatively matched with presentations by experts who discuss scientific, technological, or medical issues raised by each film. The Coolidge/Sloan Foundation nationwide Science on Screen partnership seeks to inspire in theater-goers an increased appreciation for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as compelling enterprises and vital elements of a broad understanding of human culture and current events."

BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

DAN GLESSNER RECEIVES HATTIE LARLHAM'S LUMINARY LEGACY AWARD

Brouse McDowell's Managing Partner Dan Glessner was presented with the Luminary Legacy Award at Hattie Larlham's Annual Fundraiser Bright and Blue Gala which took place on October 27th at The Aviator in Cleveland. [Find out more.](#)

JEN MICHEL RECEIVES WELLNESS LEADERSHIP AWARD FROM THE OHIO ORGANIZATION FOR NURSING LEADERSHIP

Jenny Michel, DNP, APRN-CNP, AC/PC, director of the Advanced Practice Provider Center and co-chair of the Provider Resilience Wellness Committee, has been awarded the Workforce Wellness honor from the Ohio Organization for Nursing Leadership (OONL).

The OONL serves as a catalyst for innovative health care in Ohio and the nation through expert nursing leadership. Each year, OONL holds an annual fall conference in Columbus. During the conference, three prestigious awards are given to providers in the categories of: aspiring nurse leader, OONL leadership and workforce wellness. [Find out more.](#)

JESSICA SUBLETT NAMED ONE OF CRAIN'S CLEVELAND BUSINESS 40 UNDER 40

You'd be hard-pressed to find anyone better prepared for their job—or better at executing it—than Jessica Sublett.

She became president and CEO of Bounce Innovation Hub, Akron's big downtown business incubator, at the start of 2023. But she had already been with the organization since it was formed in 2018 as chief operating officer. And, before that, Sublett was a program specialist for the Akron Global BusinessAccelerator, the organization that evolved into Bounce. [Find out more.](#)

LAURA LEDERER PROMOTED TO VP & CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER OF AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Akron Community Foundation promoted Laura Lederer to Vice President and Chief Development Officer, following the departure of Margaret Medzie, who led the organization's development and donor engagement department for the past decade.

Laura has been with the foundation's development department since October 2011, helping to bring in hundreds of new charitable funds and also building the foundation's Professional Advisor Council alongside members of the board. [Find out more.](#)



TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT

FEATURED PROPERTY

The Standard, Street Retail Storefronts
349 - 379 S. Main St.



Located in The Standard, a 236-unit apartment building in the attractive, walkable historic Main-Exchange District in downtown Akron, available retail storefront space ranges from 1850 - 4084 SF, including Shell, White-Box, Food Service, and Raw Shell options.

Highlights

- 22K Vehicles Per Day (VPD) on E. Exchange St. & 15K VPD on S. Main St.
- 650+ residential units within one city block
- 60K daytime population within one mile
- Within 1.5 miles of Akron's largest employers
- 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

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

FEATURED BUSINESS

DeJuan's Downtown Akron



DeJuan's Downtown Akron, located at 1 W. Exchange St., offers casual dining with a fine dining feel. Owner De'Juan Kelker has worked to ensure that the restaurant offers something different and exciting with every meal. Menu items include shrimp, steak, lobster, and deep fried whole island red snapper alongside handheld surf & turf burgers, PB & J burgers, desserts, and more. The main dining floor features ample seating and eclectic decor. DeJuan's also offers a monthly membership, for access to the VIP Room and other perks.

AKRON METRO RTA BREAKS GROUND ON NEW \$37M MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS FACILITY

METRO RTA was joined by Senator Sherrod Brown, Congresswoman Emilia Sykes, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, City of Akron Mayor Daniel Horrigan, American Public Transportation Association (APTA) President & CEO Paul Skoutelas, and METRO Board of Trustees President Robert DeJournett November 20 to celebrate the groundbreaking of METRO's new Maintenance and



Operations Facility. Prior to the ceremonial groundbreaking, Dr. LaDonna BlueEye was welcomed to the stage to recite an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.

METRO was awarded a Bus and Bus Facilities grant by the FTA in June 2023 totaling \$37,808,113. This investment was made possible through the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Since 1964, FTA has partnered with state and local governments to create and enhance public transportation systems, investing more than \$13 billion annually to support and expand public transit services.

"This new facility means METRO RTA will be able to not only fix buses faster, but ensure that fewer buses break down in the first place. That means better service for Akronites," said Brown. "Transit like METRO RTA is ultimately about the dignity of work. It creates jobs, it connects people with jobs, and it attracts jobs."

The purpose of this project is to support current and future operational needs by providing adequate facilities to maintain a state of good repair and improve efficiencies for METRO's maintenance and operational functions.

[Find Out More.](#)

ICYMI: IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Mayor Horrigan Unveils New City Website

The City of Akron has unveiled the new and improved City of Akron website at www.AkronOhio.gov. The new site features interactive search functionality, quick links to the most popular pages, translation into dozens of languages, an accessibility menu, and more. Additionally, a new 3-1-1 platform powered by Rock Solid is launching today on the website for citizen service requests.

“Our city website now offers a user-friendly interface, new features, enhanced functionality, and a modern look,” said Mayor Horrigan. “Most importantly, the site was designed with the user experience in mind so it will help us better interact with our residents and offer them a more streamlined platform for their use.” [Find Out More.](#)

Mayor Horrigan and Chief Mylett Announce Safe Place Program

Former Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan and Former Police Chief Steve Mylett are announcing a new Akron Police Department initiative to help victims of hate crimes and harassment receive help. The Safe Place Program is a unique partnership with the business community that allows victims fleeing a threat to quickly and easily recognize where they can go for assistance. Businesses and organizations that participate will place a decal at their entrances signifying to those in need that this location has dedicated itself as a safe place for hate crime victims to receive help quickly. [Find Out More.](#)

63rd Mayor of Akron, Shammias Malik is ready to take the lead

A specific area of focus of the first 100 days will be safety—a plank in Malik’s Together for Akron platform, and a concept that he sees as the most important service a city can provide to its resident. Malik calls it “the linchpin of our community.”

The new mayor also plans to unveil some new positions in his administration and use his first 100 days to give people a taste of what to expect from the full term.

By the end of the first year, he hopes people will feel safer and build on the energy he said he’s felt out in the community.

“I want to fan those flames,” Malik said, “and to get people excited about this community, to have a sense in this community that we are moving in the right direction. So often in our community, people hold their head down and are kind of forlorn, and I think we have an opportunity to show people what something different looks like.” [Find Out More.](#)

