



REVITALIZE OHIO

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REVITALIZE OHIO

Summer 2019

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Heritage Ohio
846 1/2 East Main Street
Columbus, OH 43205
P 614.258.6200
info@heritageohio.org
heritageohio.org

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Such good news to announce! Heritage Ohio will enjoy a reinstatement of the \$500,000 Ohio Main Street Appropriation from the Ohio General Assembly. We are grateful for the support from the House and Senate, and particularly to Senator Tim Schaffer, who introduced the amendment to the Senate budget.

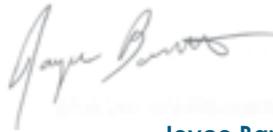
What this money will provide is investment in Ohio Main Street communities for building rehabilitation interior and exterior improvements to help local businesses increase jobs. We are determined to make you all proud of this investment and we will report on the leverage these incentives spur in our Ohio Main Street communities.

Ohio continues to enjoy “stature” as we lead the nation in co-sponsors in Congress for the Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act, introduced in May as HR 2825. This bill has several provisions which would make the 20% federal historic tax credit more accessible to rural communities and non-profits.

We were thrilled to see 28 new projects assigned Ohio Historic Tax Credits in June. This 25% tax credit has enjoyed strong support from the Ohio General Assembly as it has helped leverage over \$6 Billion in building rehabilitations. Isn't that something!

In addition to Sash Mob-windows workshop August 2nd & 3rd in Toledo, Historic Tax Credit Coffees September 9th in Marietta, Pomeroy, Gallipolis, & Ironton, and the revitalization workshop on economic vitality September 12th in Tipp City, we are very busy working on this year's fabulous annual conference. Newark has been such a welcoming city, we know you are going to enjoy and learn from the experience!

Thank you to our members for your support in helping us save the places that matter | build community | live better



Joyce Barrett,
Executive Director of Heritage Ohio

DATES TO REMEMBER

Quarterly Revitalization Workshop & Directors' Roundtable: Economic Vitality

Tipp City
September 12 – 13

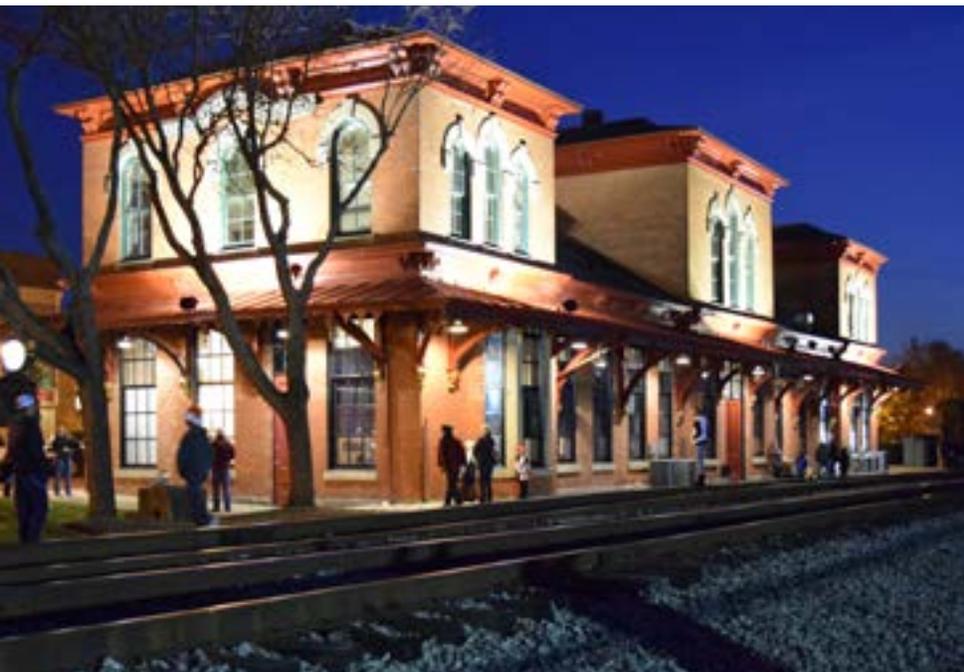
PastForward: National Preservation

Conference
Denver, CO
October 10 – 12

Heritage Ohio Annual Conference &

Awards Ceremony
Newark
October 21 – 23

For more information about upcoming events, visit us at heritageohio.org.



ON THE COVER

Congratulations go to Harrison Wicks for his winning entry titled “Kent's Historic Train Depot.” Read more about this year's photo contest winner on page 13.

Heritage Ohio Main Street Program Receives Ohio General Assembly Appropriation

Ohio's Main Street communities are teed up to receive a re-instatement of a state appropriation for \$500,000 in the Ohio General Assembly budget, which was signed on July 17th. Senator Tim Schaffer attached the amendment in the Senate version of HB 166. This money will provide up to \$20,000 for each of the 23 certified Ohio Main Street communities to make improvements to their downtown buildings through exterior and interior improvements and upper floor housing build-outs. The money requires a minimum one-to-one match, and all economic impact statistics will be tracked to show jobs created and capital investment. This investment is targeted at seeing economic growth in Ohio's towns and cities.

This reinstatement harkens back to the \$500,000 appropriated in 2007-09 state budget when \$420,622 was leveraged, providing an additional \$1,994,809 in community investment.

We can't wait to see the new projects in our Main Street communities!



Heritage Ohio Advocating for HR 2825: Federal Historic Growth and Opportunity Act

Legislation to improve the federal historic preservation tax credit has again been introduced in Congress. In a nutshell, the provisions proposed are:

1. Increase credit to 30% for small projects
2. Allow for the transfer of credits for small projects
3. Reduce "substantial rehabilitation" test from 100% to 50%
4. Eliminate basis adjustment
5. Allow non-profits to use the credit (theaters, health centers)

All of these proposed improvements would benefit Ohio. The House has introduced the bill, and there is not yet a companion Senate version.

Heritage Ohio has been working hard to show that Ohio leads the nation in historic tax credit advocacy. Already, 10 of Ohio's 16 congressional representatives have co-sponsored this bill, and we know several more are interested. It only takes a moment to either thank or encourage your representatives by contacting their congressional office.

Co-Signers as of July 15, 2019

Representative Michael Turner – District 10
Representative Marcy Kaptur – District 9
Representative Tim Ryan – District 13
Representative Steve Stivers – District 15
Representative Steve Chabot – District 1

Representative David Joyce – District 14
Representative Joyce Beatty – District 3
Representative Brad Wenstrup – District 2
Representative Bob Gibbs – District 7
Representative Anthony Gonzalez – District 16



Design-Focused Revitalization Series Workshop Brings a Splash of Color to Main Street Van Wert



It was time to get our hands a little dirty in Van Wert. In June, Van Wert hosted our Summer Revitalization Series Workshop focused on Design. Working to integrate some hands-on activities, we reached out to Mitch Price, the new Main Street Van Wert Executive Director, to see if the city would go along with us on some art integration in the downtown. Over the last few years, Jessica Mathews, a community placemaker from Columbus, has worked tirelessly to integrate art projects focused on pedestrian safety in the big city. When Heritage Ohio contacted her to lead some similar efforts in Van Wert, she gladly agreed.

When asked to allow us paint colorful crosswalks and install some temporary pedestrian signage in the downtown, the city of Van Wert had only one directive; use bright colors. So, we set to filling our agenda for the day with a mix of creative speakers and some hands-on activities to get attendees out of the classroom and onto the streets.

All of the training sessions were well received by attendees. Hearing from speaker Kevin Wright from Yard & Company, Seth Baker from Van Wert County Foundation, and Dan Baisden from City of Fort Wayne, attendees took home more information than they could carry. And they all left with a little paint on their hands.

Main Street Van Wert's social media blew up with over 200 positive comments on the colorful crosswalk painted over a mid-block pedestrian crossing on their main drag in downtown. Passersby commented and asked questions. The long game in Van Wert is to find a sponsor and paint the crosswalks

permanently. "I love the fact that the Heritage Ohio Design Training brought awareness to Van Wert and the training opened a ton of opportunities for the Historic Main Street Van Wert organization to do more design work," exclaimed Mitch Price.

Heritage Ohio staff were pleased by the collaboration of attendees, speakers, and the City of Van Wert to allow us to leave our mark on historic downtown Van Wert.

Look to Heritage Ohio for our upcoming Revitalization Series Training in Tipp City this fall where we will focus on economic vitality and offer, again, a new hands-on approach to "Growing Your Business Through Email Marketing." Expect another fun, interactive training, so come ready to work and learn.

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Main Street Wellington Wins the Independent We Stand America Main Street Contest!

Main Street Wellington earned its place as America's favorite Main Street with a compelling story that involves a few of America's other favorites, including a patriotic painting, free parking and cheese.

The annual America's Main Streets Contest highlights the important work that Main Street organizations do for their local communities. Members of the public nominate and vote for their favorite Main Street to win the coveted title and a \$25,000 prize. This year, Independent We Stand and contest sponsors, which include STIHL, Do it Best Corp., PPG Paints and the North American Retail Hardware Association, presented Main Street Wellington with the grand prize during the village's Old Fashioned Fourth of July celebration.

Jenny Arntz, Executive Director for Main Street Wellington said, "We are thrilled with how so many rallied around us to win this award with Independent We Stand. Wellington has a deep sense of pride in our history and love of community. The majority of the cash prize will be used for local building facade renovation grants, new banners, and lights so our outsides will match our insides, so to speak."

Wellington sits in Lorain County, approximately 40 miles southwest of Cleveland. Although small, the village is rich in history. In 1876, Ohio native Archibald Willard painted the iconic Yankee Doodle portrait "The Spirit of '76," in Wellington. The painting shows a trio of parading musicians in what appears to be a Revolutionary battle. Willard was actually inspired by a real parade that took place though downtown Wellington at the time. Meanwhile, Wellington was building its reputation as the "Cheese Empire of the Nation" thanks to more than 40 cheese factories that filled



Residents have spent the last several years repainting businesses on the main street in downtown Wellington through the Paint the Town Proud program.

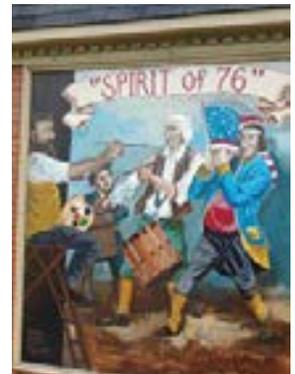


Main Street Wellington ecstatically accepting their prize as America's Main Street.

the area during the 1800s.

Today, many of the historic red brick buildings from that era still line the streets of downtown Wellington. In recent years, a coalition of local residents and businesses has worked to restore these facades to their original glory. Main Street Wellington has rallied the community in support of its vibrant history through its revitalization program called "Paint the Town Proud."

"It's truly rewarding to see parts of our historic town come to life again with a fresh coat of paint," says Scott Jerousek, third-generation business owner of Farm & Home Hardware, a Wellington-based Do it Best member store. "With the support of the America's Main Streets Contest, we are excited to be able to do even more."



Archibald Willard painted "The Spirit of '76" based on a parade that took place in Wellington.

With the \$25,000 prize, Main Street Wellington will continue its Paint the Town Proud program. There are plans to refresh downtown with signs telling the town's history and directing visitors to free parking. In particular, the community will restore a downtown building damaged by fire. True to the village's history, the renovation will preserve and highlight the building's signature "cheese" signs.

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Annual Conference

Historic downtown Newark hosts a learning lab of historic preservation and community revitalization

Mark your calendars and join us as we visit historic downtown Newark on October 21-23 for our annual preservation & revitalization conference. This year, we will be hosting the conference at the DoubleTree Hotel in downtown Newark.

We have brought together the leaders of preservation and revitalization to provide you with an exciting and educational set of sessions. There will be several new sessions at this year's conference including Beer Saves Buildings and a Building Ecosystems workshop, a complete Main Street 101 Series, as well as the return of the National Park Service's John Sandor.

We are once again providing special sessions with the state historic preservation office, covering topics like the National Register and state and federal historic preservation tax credits.

For those of you looking to get out and explore Columbus, we have several tours lined up for you. We will be exploring downtown Newark, learning about the history of ethnic groups that have made Newark a wonderful place to live, and the famous Native American earthworks that dot the landscape around the city.

For professionals attending the conference, we will once again be offering continuing education credits on many of the sessions.

This year, we are excited to announce two special guest presenters at our conference.

Chief Glenna Wallace of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe will kick things off at our opening plenary at the Midland Theatre.

Enoch Elwell, Founder and Director of Vision at CO.STARTERS, will delve into the human psyche and share his work on what drives people to revitalize their communities during the keynote address.

Conference tickets are now on sale at heritageohioconference.com, with registration open until early October. Book your room today to at the DoubleTree Hotel before it's too late! Hotel registration information can be found on the conference webpage.

We will see you in Newark this October. Get ready for a fun and exhilarating conference.



Chief Glenna Wallace



Enoch Elwell



Register today at heritageohioconference.com



Retail is Detail

Hear how the program has made Madame Bagnabit even more successful

Heritage Ohio has just graduated another cohort of businesses from Xenia, Ashland, Ravenna, Sidney, and Wellington from the Retail is Detail program. Retail is Detail provides downtown small businesses intensive, personalized education and assistance to make the changes that will bring in more shoppers and make more sales. We have partnered with Deb Miller, a business expert with a focus on retail and owner of Boulevard Strategies, to help us provide the expertise and coaching that make this program work for small businesses.

But don't just take our word for it. We interviewed Kathy Rusynyk, owner of Madame Bagnabit in downtown Ashland, after her business completed the Retail is Detail program.

Kathy, how would you describe your business?

Madame Bagnabit is a small, eclectic shop, with a little bit of everything. We are in love with nature and base a lot of our products around that. We have our own line of custom printed t-shirts, designed locally and printed by us with Earth-friendly inks. We offer custom printing and embroidery to the community as well. Aside from that, our bestselling things in our shop are the loose leaf tea, crystals and stones, incense, and our custom handmade soaps. We also sell home decor, jewelry, accessories, books, and all sorts of new age/meta-physical items. Our motto is "Embrace your natural tendencies." whatever they may be!

What coaching recommendation had the biggest impact on your store?

The coaching suggestion that has had the biggest impact was to focus. Be less all over the place, and zone in on ideas/themes. She had us repaint the entire store, add wood accents, and re-merchandise some displays - all of that really helped to bring the look and feel of the store together.

What recommendation were you reluctant to try, but ended up being useful after you implemented it?



I think we were a little hesitant to revamp the entire layout and look of the store, because we love wild and funky things, but doing what she said with the color palette she suggested has really helped to bring the whole environment of the store together while allowing the funky products to pop.

Before anyone opens up a downtown retail-focused small business, what piece of advice would you give them?

My advice to anyone else opening a shop is that you have to be true to yourselves and have a genuine love behind what you're doing. Also, social media is huge!!! [laughs] It is so hard to keep up with social media, but the payoff is incredible.

Any final comments on Retail is Detail?

Overall we feel honored to have been part of Retail is Detail and I think that year will always be cherished to us. We are now doing better than ever!

If you think your downtown business would benefit from one-on-one business coaching to gain valuable business skills and the assistance they need to get to the next level, contact Heritage Ohio about the next class of Retail is Detail program.



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Pictured: the Cartisle Building in Chillicothe, OH



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Historic Homes of Ohio

Unique features throughout this brick building built in 1872 make this mixed use space in Wellington one to love.

Jason Keith had a challenge convincing his wife Kelly to renovate the apartment above their barbershop. So much so, that he went “above and beyond” designing and building a modern 1,500 sq. ft. home just to prove he was right. It wasn’t until Kelly saw her bedroom and walk-in closet did she realize that their new home was going to be amazing.

Erected in 1872, the Colonial Barbershop is the state’s oldest operating barbershop in its original location. The Keiths purchased the building in 2012 and commuted from Berea until deciding to move to Wellington. They helped their tenant find a new place two buildings down and started renovations in March of 2016. Soon after, they sold their home and moved into the 400 sq. ft. apartment in the back of the barbershop, along with their two German Shepherds.

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, Jason worked in construction, and with the help of Kelly and daughters Hayley and Heather, was able to do everything except install the HVAC unit. Kelly stated that they had renovated homes



prior, but never down to the studs. They re-used most of the original wood, which makes a few of their walls a bit wavy. They also re-used old pipes as a railing for a loft style bed. A cistern, believed to have collected rainwater for the original “bath house” portion of the barbershop, was upcycled into a large dining table and kitchen shelving. After removing the paneling, lathe, and plaster, they were fortunate to find



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Jason Blain
VP, Business Development Manager
231.922.1440
jblain@insitecapital.com

Sadie Erickson
VP, Business Development Manager
616.494.9022
serickson@insitecapital.com



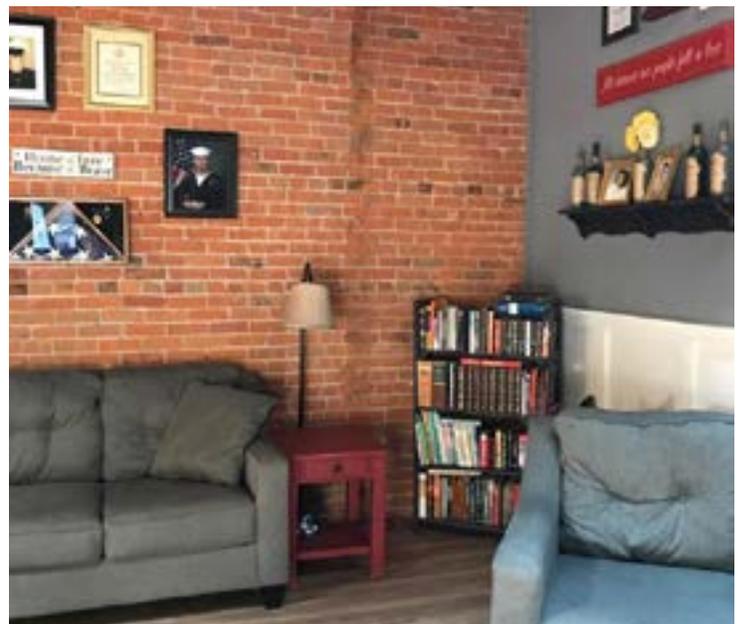
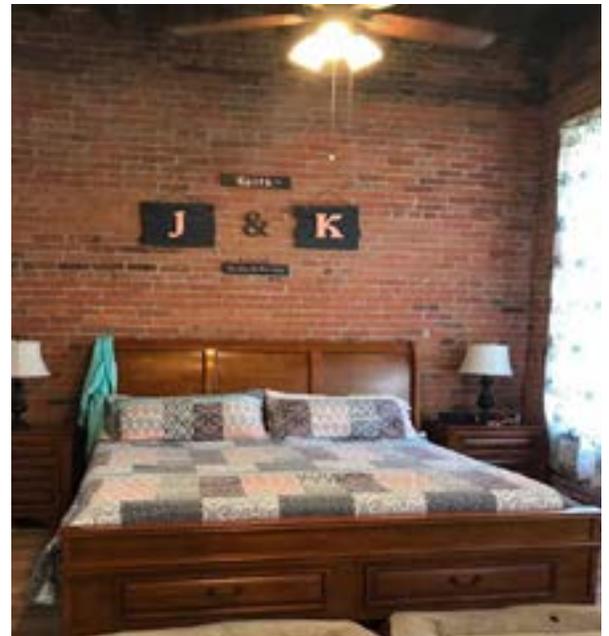
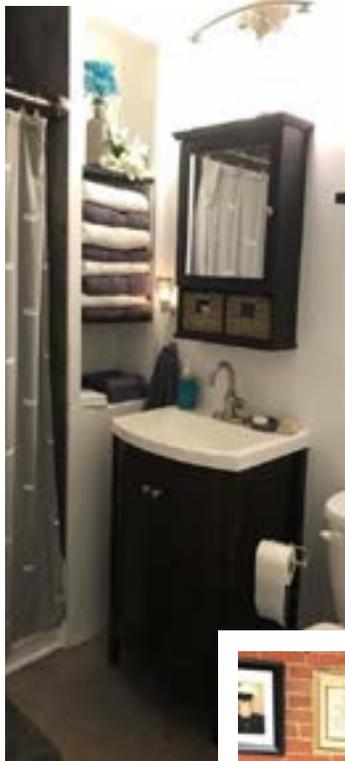
the brick in good condition. They also cleaned and sealed the exposed rafters and kept an old skylight. The biggest challenge was raising part of the floor about 16 inches to level.

The Keiths were determined not to finance or charge supplies for the renovation. They also continued to work full time, so it took until September 2017 to complete the project. Their effort and love of family shows prominently in their home; from the wall highlighting their military service, to one of Kelly's favorite movie quotes on each stair leading to the apartment. The experience brought the high school sweethearts closer together and they believe this will be their forever home. It helps that all three of their children, son-in-law, and grandson also live in Wellington.

This past year, they renovated the first floor of their son's building (while he was finishing a tour in the Navy) in about 45 days. It's currently home to The Charmed Farmhouse, LLC, an upscale home décor and "sign party" business. The Keiths are taking a break from renovating, but plan to complete the second story above Farmhouse in the near future.



See more historic homes of Ohio transformations and the tales behind them in the next issue of Revitalize Ohio.



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Where History Meets Energy | Saving the Places that Matter, and the Earth Too

How to use Historic Tax Credits and Property Assessed Clean Energy for the gap financing you need.

"The greenest building is the one that is already built." - Architect Carl Elefante

This long-known preservationist mantra still rings true today. Whenever you step back and look at the big picture it will seem obvious to most of us that if we aim to recycle, reduce, and reuse the resources around us, our built environment should be at the top of the list. However, it is also important to recognize that the buildings should not be left standing to sit in a museum-like state, untouched, unaltered, and therefore unused forever. Buildings need users and those users need spaces equipped for modern use. Historic buildings can easily rise to meet this need through creative and sometimes complex rehabilitation.

While many preservation-oriented developers know that Historic Tax Credits (HTCs) are the bread and butter of making difficult to nearly impossible rehabilitation projects a reality, Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing is still quite new to the historic preservation funding world. Though the pro-formas of projects that utilize HTCs often use additional forms of financing and incentives, PACE financing is a tool that has not yet met its full potential as a suitable partner to HTCs.

What is PACE

Property Assessed Clean Energy or PACE is a financing mechanism that works through a special assessment with a municipality in order to cover the cost of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation infrastructure for a new or existing building. With concern to existing buildings that would qualify to use HTCs, this could be a source of funding to cover the cost of improvements to HVAC systems, insulation, roofs, elevators, solar and geothermal, energy improvements to windows, and other energy efficiency upgrades to a rehabilitation project.

How PACE works

Since the aim of PACE is to provide funding for infrastructure improvements for the purpose of conserving water or energy and generating renewable energy, there is a public benefit. By making these changes, you are creating a positive environmental impact that benefits everyone by creating cleaner air and water. That public benefit is the first key to how PACE functions. An assessment on a property can

be made by a municipality to pay for items that benefit the public with a direct effect on those properties including parks, sidewalks, streetlights, water & sewer service, and more recently PACE projects.

Ohio passed legislation enabling use of property-based tax assessments for clean energy projects in 2009. In order to use them on a property, the municipality must pass an ordinance to establish an Energy Special Improvement District (ESID). An ESID is a public body controlled by a non-profit board set up for that purpose. An ESID is a type of special improvement district, which have long been used by communities to fund public improvement projects at the local level. When the ESID is created, the boundaries are the properties that want to use the tool, and this area does not have to be contiguous. Property owners must opt in if they want to be added to the district boundaries in order to use PACE. The board established to control the ESID adds interested properties to the district on a project-by-project basis.

Some communities in Ohio were quick to take advantage of this new funding mechanism while others are still catching up. Additionally, many metropolitan areas are encompassed by regional ESIDs already. Columbus Regional ESID, the Northeast Ohio Advanced Energy District in and around Cleveland, the Suburban Communities ESID around Cincinnati, the Northwest Ohio Advanced Energy Improvement District in and around Toledo, the Dayton Regional ESID and the Akron-Summit County ESID are all regionally established.

PACE can also help incentivize current building owners to make improvements and continue maintenance. The tenants and businesses within those buildings that use PACE benefit from lower energy costs and that increases their bottom line. Property owners choose to participate and there is no added cost for the ESID to be in place if they do not participate.

Once there is an ESID in place a property owner can undertake project and choose to apply for PACE financing through a PACE provider. Just about any capital provider can be a PACE provider, so long as they agree to accept payment through the special assessment. Though even

small banks and lenders can be PACE providers if they choose, it is still quite new and unfamiliar to many. Currently much of the funding is coming from public port authorities and through PACE specific private lenders or banks.

The lender that is chosen, much like a typical bank loan, determines the amount of the project that can be funded and other terms of repayment such as interest. As PACE providers vary on underwriting terms, there is no easy formula to know how much PACE funding you can build in without reaching out to a lender about your individual project. However, as an example, The Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance gave us the following guidelines during a Heritage Ohio webinar:

- Up to 30 years
- Up to 35% PACE assessment of appraised value (\$1M appraised property value = \$350K PACE amount) property value = \$250K PACE + \$700K Mortgage Loan)
- Prepayment option is available, typically 3% of outstanding balance
- Mortgage lender consent required, 150+ banks have signed off

This is only an example and may not apply to your specific property, but gives you a ballpark idea of what might be possible. “Commercial bank lending is highly dependent on the individual bank and its relationship with the property owner and the subject property. PACE lending can be a valuable tool for a commercial bank, as a PACE loan will provide the commercial bank with the additional security of the property tax lien without changing any current security arrangement. The PACE loan also doesn’t affect the ratio of collateral for any previous or contemplated loans. If a bank is involved with other sources of financing on a project, becoming a PACE lender allows for the bank to maintain greater control without redoing other credit decisions. (Bricker & Eckler)”

Once the project is funded, the PACE provider works with the municipality to add the annual repayment value as an assessment to the property’s tax bill, which will stay with the property until the financing is paid in full. It is simpler for the property owner who does not have a bank loan in their personal portfolio to contend with and the municipality pays the PACE provider when the payments are received. When the assessments fail to be paid, they are handled the same way taxes are and a lien is placed on the property. This is good for lenders who can be assured the debt will be paid. Since the assessment is attached to the property and not the owner, the assessment is transferred with the property to the new owner if they should sell it (Note: If pairing with the federal HTC, recapture of the credit may occur if property ownership is transferred within the initial 5-year period). Additionally, property owners can distribute the assessment to tenants who receive the benefits of the energy upgrades making it more affordable.

How Can They Work Together

No matter the funding source for PACE financing, the project can still add other incentives to the capital stack to make tricky projects possible, including Historic Tax Credits. For a historic rehabilitation project utilizing HTCs, the cost of getting a building into shape for modern uses can be a significant portion of the project budget and even a barrier to completing the project. Many rehabilitation projects include the upgrading or replacement of HVAC systems and controls, improving the building envelope, replacing high-energy lighting systems, and various other energy related expenses. While these items may not be needed to preserve the historic integrity of the building, they are absolutely needed to make the building usable and comfortable enough to retain the tenants needed to make the project a long-term success.

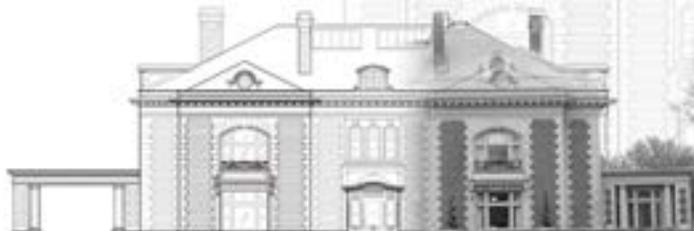
PACE can be utilized as a funding source for these elements of the project.



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Harrison Wicks' image of the historic Erie Depot captures the vibrancy of the building, reinforcing the importance of having the creativity to see an old building not as an eyesore, but as an opportunity

2019 Historic Preservation Month Photo Contest Winner

We're excited to announce the winner of this year's Preservation Month Photo Contest! Congratulations go to Harrison Wicks for his image titled "Kent's Historic Train Depot." Here's an excerpt from his entry about the building that served as the photographic inspiration for this year's theme, Urban Renewal:

Kent's historic Erie Depot boasts a long, storied history of community support since it was built in 1875. Under the direction of Kent's namesake, Marvin Kent, townspeople showed their support by donating funds to build the train depot for The Atlantic and Great Western Railroad. The depot was left vacant in the late 1960s after a series of economic downturns. With demolition looming, the Kent Historical Society saved the then almost century-old structure. It was around this time in 1974 when the Kent Industrial District in downtown was added to the National Register of Historic Places, including the depot.

A decade later, the Historical Society found an investor who renovated the building, transforming it into the Pufferbelly Ltd. restaurant. After many years of success, the Pufferbelly Ltd. restaurant closed its doors and an opportunity arose for a new concept.

Now, 40 years after that renovation, the Kent Historical Society continues to maintain ownership of the depot and has leased the building to a partnership of local businessmen and investors to bring to life a culinary exploration of northern Italian fine dining.

Thanks to those dedicated local preservationists you can now enjoy a great meal at Treno Ristorante in a one-of-a-kind railroad depot.

Congratulations to Harrison and thank you to everyone who voted this year! Stay tuned in 2020 as we announce the opening of our annual Preservation Month Photo Contest.



Wadsworth Transforms with CDBG Downtown Revitalization Grant

Like many other towns and villages founded in the 19th century, Wadsworth's downtown served as the commercial, social and government hub of the community; its rise and decline followed the same pattern that many other communities faced.

Although downtown suffered decline, the buildings and other urban fabric remained mostly intact. Wadsworth's downtown contains buildings dating from 1860s through the early years of the 20th century. St. Mark's Episcopal Church, just on the western edge of downtown, dates back to 1841 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Revitalization Efforts

Many ideas were tossed about over the years in an attempt to return downtown Wadsworth to its role as the community hub.

In 2004, a civic organization named Downtown Wadsworth, Inc. (DWI), was created to revitalize the downtown district. In late 2014, DWI approached the City about applying for Downtown Revitalization funds through the state's CDBG program. The City hired a CDBG consultant to assist with the preparing an application for the 2015 funding round. The consultant, city staff and volunteers from DWI spent the early months of 2015 compiling the information and data required for the application. Unfortunately, the City's 2015 application was not funded.

Undeterred, the City and Main Street Wadsworth vowed to reapply in 2016 and several other factors converged, which may have led to the 2016 application being successful. First, the City was involved in a planning process for downtown improvements that resulted in a Downtown



Visioning Plan being adopted by the City in February 2017. One of the primary goals from this plan was to encourage reinvestment in the structures downtown and it identified several possible funding sources including CDBG programs, to help with these efforts.

Secondly, Downtown Wadsworth, Inc. (DWI) became a designated Main Street America™ community, changed its name to Main Street Wadsworth and took on a more active role in the grant application process.



After 2015, the City was no longer eligible to apply directly to the state for CDBG funding. Instead, applications needed to be made through Medina's County's CDBG program. This meant that the County would have to file an application on our behalf, so the City and MSW added a new partner to the collaboration – Medina County. The County agreed as to how the grant would be administered and what the roles of the three partners would be. An application was filed by the May 2016 deadline. This time – success!!! The application was funded.

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The grant program awarded to the City was for \$300,000. \$30,000 was set aside for administration with the remaining \$270,000 to be used for building improvements. As originally designed, the grant required a 50% match from the building owners, so the minimum reinvestment in downtown buildings was expected to be \$540,000. The maximum grant funds to be use on any given building were capped at \$15,000. The grant was expected to provide improvements to 22 buildings within the downtown target area.

Revitalization Grant – Challenges & Results

Initial excitement gave way to trepidation, within the first six months, only half of the applications expected had been filed and only one project was ready for bid. This was especially concerning since 31 building owners had filed participation



surveys indicating their willingness to participate in the program. MSW contacted business & building owners to find out why they were not applying.

It was discovered that many were concerned that the 50% match coupled with the requirement to pay federal prevailing wages, did not make their project cost or time effective. Others noted that even if they could do a project through the program at no more than what it would cost hiring the job locally, the time it took to get approval to start and complete a project through the program was a concern.

This feedback, led us to request permission to amend the program. The match was changed to 75% (grant), 25% (owner) and the cap per building was raised to \$20,000 and later removed entirely.

Because of these changes, the number of applications increased in short order. Through the Downtown Revitalization Grant, we were able to provide over \$269,600 in assistance to 17 buildings in downtown. With the owner's match the total investment in downtown reached nearly \$349,000. In addition, another \$173,500 in public and private investment went into improving downtown's infrastructure and streetscape.

The Four Keys to the Grant's Success

Plan - From the comprehensive plan, to the downtown

visioning plan, to the utility & infrastructure master plan, the City could always show that funding was to advance the goals of community planning efforts.

Partner – Support and coordination between all beneficiaries is required. Without the coordination between the City, Medina County, Main Street Wadsworth, Chamber of Commerce and downtown business and property owners, the grant would not likely have been awarded.

Adapt – When the participation was not as high as anticipated, find out why and revise the program accordingly (with the state's approval, of course).

Communication – Keep all parties informed and up to date. Always be on the "same page".



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