



**RICHLAND AREA
CHAMBER**
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Strong Business • Strong Community

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REPORT TO THE RICHLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Economic & Workforce Development Report

REPORTING PERIOD

January 1, 2026 to July 21, 2026



Ribbon cutting at Pioneer Career and Technology Center's Advanced Manufacturing Center

The Six Months, By the Numbers

Figures marked “projected” or “pending” are underway, not yet finished. The team builds the conditions for these results, while companies and investors deliver most of the outcomes themselves.

79

New jobs projected

\$4.5M

New payroll projected

\$25M

Downtown Investment: Downtown Forward/Windsor Companies, 95 market rate units

25 MW

Planned solar electric generation

19 of 23

Site RFIs accepted by JobsOhio, of 42 total reviewed

\$60K

Workforce funding secured additional RESEA reemployment dollars

\$2.565M

Grant funding requested

2028

Area 10 Workforce Development Board, re-certified for 2 years

\$5M

Historic tax credits awarded for Mansfield projects

\$1.1M

TMUD tax credits awarded for Mansfield projects

Local Company Expansion

The companies already here are the surest growth Richland County has. Several got bigger this year with our team at the table.

DIRECT Work done in house

PARTNERED Done with or through others

OUTCOME A result a company or investor produced

Newman Technology: A Tier 1 automotive parts maker on Cairns Road, running two shifts with about 630 workers. The company is investing in new stamping press technology to make parts it could not before, and chose Mansfield over other sites for the investment. The **\$74M** expansion adds **70 jobs** and about **\$3.5M** in new payroll, backed by a state tax credit and a 15-year city abatement, and is scheduled to finish by October 2027.

DIRECT

OUTCOME, PROJECTED

R.G. Smith: A Canton-based custom steel fabricator at 166 W. Sixth St. that has served heavy industry within about a 60-mile radius for more than three decades in Mansfield. The company is adding high-bay manufacturing space and a second 10-ton crane to take on larger weldments, supported by a zoning variance and property tax abatement, and should yield **8 to 10 new jobs**, representing nearly **\$1M** in new payroll.

DIRECT

OUTCOME, PROJECTED

Port Authority Financing: Closed **three** Port Authority deals this period: an equipment purchase for Avita, a new spec building for Adena, and a CNG expansion for ICP, with three additional deals on deck.

DIRECT

OhioHealth and Nationwide Children's: A **\$38.4M** project in Ontario adding a new medical campus to bring care close to home, plus additional investment in the current facility creating a medical hub with specialty care services.

OUTCOME



OhioHealth and Nationwide Children's groundbreaking, R.S. Handline visit, and Pioneer Career and Technology Center.

Local Company Expansions In Process

In process expansion projects and ongoing business-retention work.

Incentive structuring: Built local incentive packages, including job creation tax credits and property tax abatements, to anchor expansions in place. Several this year.

DIRECT

Annexation and zoning: Moved annexations and zoning variances through the approval process to clear the way for growth on existing sites.

DIRECT

Facility growth: Supported companies taking on larger buildings and new space as they outgrow their current footprint. Several this year.

PARTNERED

Infrastructure for expansion: Worked to secure the power capacity and utility infrastructure a major employer needs to expand in place, including a **\$1.9M** grant application and progress-payment financing arranged with help from a state lawmaker.

DIRECT

PARTNERED

Local retention: Kept a growing company in the county through the business incubator rather than losing it out of state. Now assisting the company with local real estate options.

DIRECT

OUTCOME

Small business lending: Closed lending support through the office's Collateral Enhancement Program: two loans to local businesses.

DIRECT

Retention visits: Kept a steady rhythm of business retention and expansion visits across manufacturing, aviation, and service to stay close to the existing employer base.

DIRECT

Partner connections: Connected companies to JobsOhio, Team NEO, MAGNET, and workforce programs for the resources they need to grow.

PARTNERED

Hilton on the Hill: Moved a site plan through stormwater review and delivered a tax-abatement recommendation.

DIRECT



Charter Next Generation at the Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development's Annual Meeting.

Business Attraction

Attraction runs on relationships and ready sites. The developer connections built this year are the pipeline for what comes next.

Site visit with company: Conducted a site visit for an exciting auto-manufacturing project, setting the bar high among **five competing communities** with strong properties and workforce assets, and turning an affordability concern into a selling point. The project is currently in a holding pattern, but still alive.

DIRECT

Buc-ee's: Bringing one of its massive travel centers to the I-71 and Ohio 39 interchange, a store of more than **70,000 sq. ft.** on about **37 acres** representing roughly **\$75M** in investment and **175 to 225** full-time jobs. Supported the Type 2 annexation and the development agreement through Council, and with the land purchase now closed, the pieces are in place.

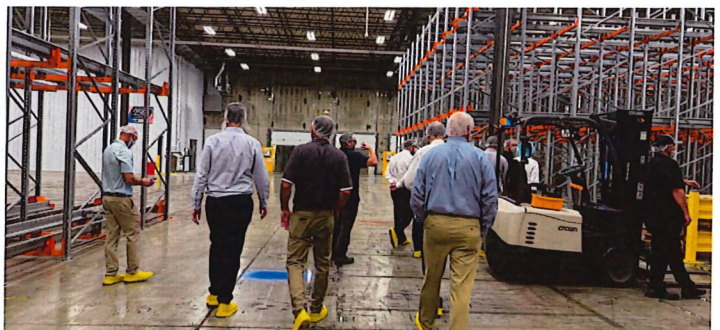
PARTNERED **OUTCOME**

Advanced manufacturing site: Continuing conversations with a developer about a large site for a significant manufacturing project in need of large-scale utilities, one of the quiet-engine developer relationships behind future attraction.

DIRECT **PARTNERED**

JobsOhio RFI pipeline: Reviewed and responded to **42** site-selector RFIs; **23** were submitted and **19** accepted for presentation to site selectors, including a dairy-manufacturing prospect and a 300+ job ammunition-manufacturing prospect.

DIRECT **PARTNERED**



Team Neo presentation, Economic forecast breakfast, and Site visit at RS Handline.

Site Readiness

Deals move at the speed of site readiness. This work is about being ready before the prospect calls.

Countywide CRA program: Kept Mansfield's commercial CRA program in good standing with the state, formalized the Collateral Enhancement Program loan tool, and corrected a filing error that returned **\$4,935** to Crestview schools.

DIRECT

Bellville/SR-97 corridor: Developing Community Reinvestment Act legislation with Bellville officials to capture value from continued growth at the SR-13 and SR-39 interchanges along I-71.

PARTNERED

SiteOhio certification: Three sites, one each in Mansfield, Ontario, and Shelby, submitted for the state's SiteOhio certification process.

DIRECT

New site options: Engaged an engineering firm for preliminary work on new industrial sites and early soil feasibility on one additional site.

PARTNERED

Airport Economic Development Plan: Mansfield Lahm Regional Airport is a shared civilian and defense field, home to the 179th, and the office wrote a new five-year economic development plan to turn its aviation, defense, and workforce assets into a driver of jobs and investment. Drafted the plan, gathered feedback from the airport's defense partners, its fixed-base operator, and operations staff, anchored the development section to real appraisal values, and presented the five-year vision to City Council.

DIRECT

S. Main gateway corridor: Built a **151-parcel** evaluation system for the Mansfield CIC, a major step forward that lets the office target investment and effort where it changes the first impression of the city on arrival. The board affirmed the strategy and a fundraising ask.

DIRECT

Aero Site: Advanced OSIP grant narratives, CIC project descriptions, and the site-control work.

DIRECT

Lixil building: Working to have the building donated to the CIC; it will more likely be bought and renovated by a developer, which is a win for the community either way.

PARTNERED

Grant applications: Submitted a **\$300K** ODOT TID application for the Mansfield Landing corridor and OSIP applications tied to the Aero Site and the airport plan.

DIRECT

PARTNERED

Airport West Buildings 1 & 2: **160,000 sq. ft.** divisible plus **150,000 sq. ft.** expandable to **300,000 sq. ft.**, move-in ready and actively marketed.

OUTCOME



Aero Site.

Downtown Development

Downtown is where investment becomes something people can see. Three projects moved it forward this year.

Hearth and Forge Hotel: The former Holiday Inn project, now named. CRA package assembled and passed through Council; financing includes an SBA 504 backup and TMUD support.

DIRECT **PARTNERED**

Downtown Forward, Windsor: Secured the CRA and development agreement that took the project public, a **\$25M** adaptive-reuse project bringing roughly **95 apartments** across 14 Brickyard buildings.

DIRECT **OUTCOME**

Shaw building, Shelby: Signed an LOI with the main tenant to occupy the historic Shaw building at Main and Gamble, a public/private partnership years in the making. A JobsOhio Vibrant Communities Grant application is planned for August to finalize the capital stack.

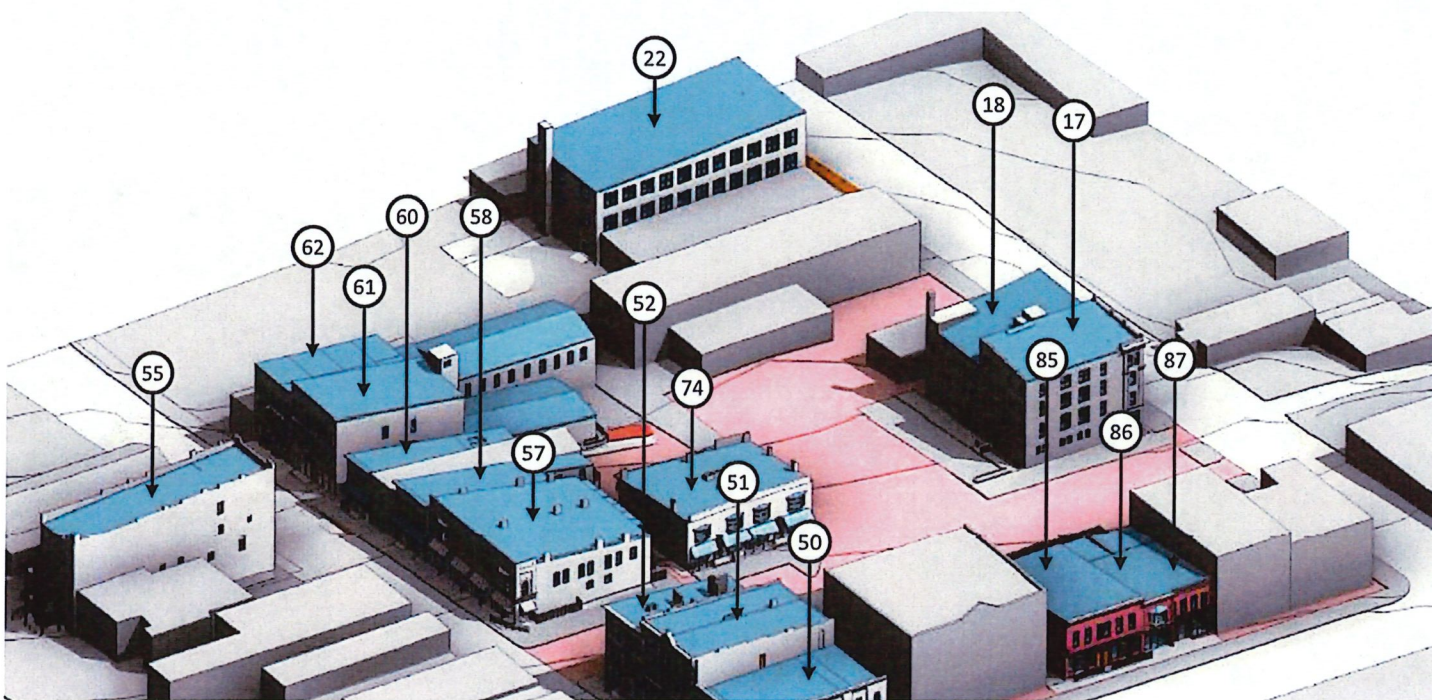
DIRECT

19 Mansfield Ave.: Milliron Foundation purchased the property with plans to redevelop it into **24** market-rate apartments.

OUTCOME

Mansfield tax credits: Downtown Mansfield projects were awarded **\$5M** in historic tax credits and **\$1.1M** in TMUD tax credits.

OUTCOME



Downtown Mansfield Renderings.

Housing

New rooftops are the demand signal every employer and retailer watches, and the pipeline grew this year.

Market-rate housing: Advanced two significant developments through entitlement, a large market-rate project moving toward Planning Commission, and a second project on the northeast side of town.

DIRECT **OUTCOME**

CHN Housing Partners: Explored a senior-housing concept for Mansfield and toured CHN's product in Cleveland with the Mayor.

PARTNERED

Milliron Estates: Working through zoning.

DIRECT

Welcome Home Ohio: Advised the Land Bank on scattered-site infill as a continuation of prior blight removal. Walked lots in Shelby with Praxis Partners and City of Shelby officials on July 17, confirming **six sites**: five on Second Street and one on Oak Street.

PARTNERED

Countywide: Continued exploring housing opportunities in Bellville (Urban Meadows, Valley View Farm) and Butler (Clear Fork Ski Resort).

PARTNERED



Leadership Unlimited Housing Day and Milliron Estates.

Workforce

Workforce is the first question every prospect asks, and the region's training tools stay in front of employers.

Area 10 Workforce Development Board: Completed a bylaws rewrite, closed a DOL VETS audit finding, cleared an escalated federal data-validation review, and received a two-year state re-certification through **July 2028**.

DIRECT OUTCOME

RESEA funding: Secured an additional **\$60,000** after Richland and Crawford Counties exhausted their allocations, keeping reemployment services running without a gap.

DIRECT OUTCOME

EmployMEpalooza: Built the March 24 reverse job fair at Richland Academy of the Arts, with WMFD radio coverage.

DIRECT

Business Leader Bootcamp: Grew the employer-and-teacher tour to **13+** businesses across Richland, Morrow, and Crawford Counties.

DIRECT PARTNERED

Transit access: Supported new early-morning and late-evening transit routes for 2nd- and 3rd-shift manufacturing workers, a barrier jobseekers raise constantly.

PARTNERED OUTCOME

Training pipeline: Kept Incumbent Worker Training and WIOA Area 10 programs in front of employers and referred companies for training support.

PARTNERED

National recognition: A faculty debut at the U.S. Chamber's IOM Institute drew follow-up interest from chambers in six states; represented Area 10 at the National Association of Workforce Boards Forum.

DIRECT OUTCOME



EmployMEpalooza, IOM, and Richland County Transit Ribbon Cutting.

Community

Community work is the ground everything else stands on.

Landfill solar, CEP Renewables: Advanced a project bringing up to **25 MW-ac** of renewable power onto a closed landfill; restructured into two clean leases with a development agreement approved.

DIRECT PARTNERED

Countywide Comprehensive Plan: Our team is partnered in spearheading as well as serving on the Steering Committee with the Richland County Regional Planning Commission to gather resident, business, and agricultural input.

PARTNERED

Agritourism: Kicked off a Discover Richland tour to advance agritourism as an economic driver.

DIRECT

Economic Edge newsletter: Continued the quarterly newsletter highlighting countywide economic-development efforts.

DIRECT

State policy: Joined the U.S. Route 30 middle-mile broadband scoring committee.

DIRECT PARTNERED

Mansfield Speedway: Supported the rebuild with ADA and accessibility funding research.

DIRECT



Mansfield Speedway Ribbon Cutting and Discover Richland's Harvest Horizons Tour.

Looking Ahead

In the near term, these are the priorities we are working on to advance economic development in Richland County.

PRIORITY 1

Airport Development

Guided by a five-year strategic plan, efforts will prioritize infrastructural development, aviation industry attraction and alignment with Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) and defense initiatives.

The plan outlines six strategies to fortify Airport economic output. Each strategy is supported by tactical action, some of which fall under Chamber purview:

- **Communication of plan:** Includes plan adoption by Mansfield City Council and proper public dissemination. Council is expected to vote on the plan in mid-August.
- **Redevelopment of 508 Building:** To support advanced industry attraction efforts, this building will be redeveloped for training and workforce development.
- **Advancement of the 179th:** The nation's first cyberspace wing continues to build toward full mission capability. Utility requirements, workforce development and facility needs will be continually addressed with multiple county, state and federal partners.

As aviation, drone, defense and supportive industries continue to grow in need and opportunity, Mansfield Lahm will remain vital to local development efforts.

PRIORITY 2

Site Development

Key short-term efforts include further site development and targeted corporate attraction. Several tactics will support this strategy:

- **SiteOhio participation:** JobsOhio has reopened SiteOhio program enrollment. This certification, indicating a particular site's due diligence has been thoroughly vetted, is Ohio's gold standard for site readiness. Richland County currently has one certified site (Airport West). In July, three more local sites were accepted into the queue for State review. Certification efforts will continue.
- **Ontario efforts:** The City of Ontario continues to generate interest amongst nationally branded retailers. The Ontario Commerce Park remains a viable site for manufacturing as well. Efforts shall continue to promote Ontario to interested companies.
- **Outbound marketing:** In Q3/4, Economic Development will identify, target and engage with corporate partners in four categories: Electric grid manufacturers, metal/aluminum producers, battery engineers/manufacturers and data industry suppliers. Other clusters targeted for future efforts include aviation manufacturers, ag tech and advanced cybersecurity.

Efforts will include identifying key corporate decision makers and developing communication strategies for tactical engagement. DRM has been retained to assist with these efforts.

PRIORITY 3

Housing Efforts

A variety of housing efforts are in various stages of development around the county. Economic Development will support these efforts by nurturing partnerships, investigating incentives and working with local officials. When it comes to housing, a win anywhere in Richland County is a win everywhere.

County partnership

Over the next six months, Economic Development will make advances in workforce development, business expansion, new business recruitment, housing and planning. The strategic and financial support of the Richland County Board of Commissioners will continue to be crucial. Thank you for all your contributions and we appreciate your leadership.

