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The Year in Review

The focus of many area companies over the past year has been investigating new markets, diversifying clients and supplier networks, and learning how to produce more with less. Ingenuity and versatility have been the keys to their sustainability and success.

One of the most inventive projects in 2009 in Norwalk, and arguably the entire country, was Huron County's 'Norwalk Rail Spur Project.' This project was awarded \$220,000 from the Ohio Department of Development's competitive Industrial Site Improvement Fund program. The funding allowed New Horizons Baking Company to have one of their largest commodities, flour, delivered via rail. After arriving, the flour will be transported into the facility by a specialized vacuum and blower system.

New Horizons Baking Company has also announced a new \$3.7 million project slated for their Norwalk facility which will utilize local builders and contractors to complete the project. This is a huge win for the area, and it says a great deal about the community and New Horizons' continued commitment to Norwalk.

The good news is this is just one of 28 other companies that have invested, expanded or located in the Norwalk area over the past year. The Norwalk Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) has worked with over 70% of them.

These companies invested over \$13 million dollars and created over 205 new jobs. This is exceptional news in any economy.

Collaboration abounded at the local, regional, and state levels, and partnerships between the private and public sectors developed even further. From workforce, energy, and industrial grants to regional strategies, wind studies and airport taskforces, 2009 was a year of new opportunities.



Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher joins Tim Brown, the New Horizons team and community stakeholders for the ribbon cutting in October

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Investment Highlights

New Horizons' \$3.7 Million New Investment One of Several in Local Area

Shortly after beginning the Norwalk Rail Spur Project, **New Horizons Baking Company** began investigating the possibility of reinvesting in their Norwalk Facility. The project will add 8,800 sq. ft. and new equipment that will be more energy efficient, reducing energy costs and improving productivity. Construction will begin in late fall and they plan to finish by spring 2010.

Maple City Ice completed an estimated \$350,000 addition of 12,000 square feet to their building on Cleveland Road. The project is completed and the company has also added a couple of new employees to their workforce in 2009.

Gardner's SuperValu Foods invested in significant cosmetic renovations to both their interior and exterior areas. Gardner's worked closely with **Hill's Interiors** and **Janotta & Herner** to design and complete the projects, which totaled \$300,000.

FriendShip Food Store opened this year, adding many new jobs

FTMC & EPIC Recognized Nationally



Fisher-Titus Medical Center

In 2009, Fisher-Titus Medical Center was named one of the **Top 100 Best Places to Work in Healthcare** in the United States by *Modern Healthcare Magazine* for the second consecutive year. Fisher-Titus was the only Ohio hospital to have earned this award two years in a row and earned a ranking of #55.

In addition, Fisher-Titus also was honored with the HealthGrades distinctive **Outstanding Patient Experience Award** for exemplary service to patients two years in a row (2009-2010). The nation's leading independent health-care ratings firm, HealthGrades, ranked FTMC in the top 10% of all hospitals in the US in this category. FTMC also earned 5-star clinical rankings from HealthGrades in orthopedics and in treating respiratory failure.



In March, EPIC Technologies **won all five individual service category awards** in its revenue size class at the **2009 Service Excellence Awards (SEAs)** for Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) providers.

The awards program was sponsored by Circuits Assembly magazine and recognized EMS companies that received the highest customer service ratings as judged by their own customers. EPIC received awards for Responsiveness, Dependability/Timely Delivery, Manufacturing Quality, Technology and Value.

and a new facility, with an estimated investment of over \$600,000.

Summit Motorsports Park, Americraft Carton and **Baumann Auto Group** also made substantial investments in their companies with facility renovations or equipment. **National City/PNC** will invest approximately \$40,000 for a new regional training center at their Norwalk location. **Finance Service of Norwalk** more than doubled their workforce in 2009, adding 5 new jobs and investing \$25,000.

New developments were also underway for area restaurants and a convenient store. **Bob Evans** moved into their new building in Norwalk Commons and the **Up Town Café** opened in 2009, after significant upgrades to the building's interior space. The café is located near the center of the Uptown District.

Norwalk Custom Order Furniture just reached its one year anniversary in October, adding 34 jobs and opening over 107 new accounts since January 1st. They attribute their success to the support they received from their investors, the community and their workforce.



New Horizons Baking Company

Business Retention & Expansion Business Appreciation Week 2009

NEDC's Sixth Annual Norwalk Area Business Appreciation Week was held during the last week of April.

In one week, over 50 volunteers visited with leaders from over 100 companies to demonstrate our local community's commitment to supporting business development. Of the companies visited in 2009, over 60% have recently or are planning to expand services in the near future. They plan to do this by offering new services, breaking into new markets, adding employees, or modifying or adding space. An apparent reoccurring theme with businesses was the need to expand markets and "reinvent" themselves in order to stay competitive.

Despite the economy, 18% of company executives said their business was doing well in the first quarter of 2009, and they reported "good economic conditions" in their industries.

Type of Expansion Described	#
Employees Only	14
Additional Space Only	6
Renovating Space	9
Purchasing New Equipment	4
New Space and Employees	6
Buying Land or Building	3
New Markets/New Products	27

Workforce Development & Training

Manufacturers Appreciation Day Kicks-Off Local Collaboration

Norwalk Area Manufacturers' gathered in May for "Manufacturers Appreciation Day." The guest speaker was Lt. Governor Lee Fischer, and over 26 local manufacturers were in attendance. The event was well-received by all who attended.

Following Manufacturers' Appreciation Day, the Manufacturers met for a brainstorming session in June and determined there is a need and interest for area manufacturers to meet on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis to share resources, best practices, and create a *Manufacturers Council*. The group has met twice, in August and October. The meetings focused on Safety and Training .

Preliminary discussions have started about creating a training consortium for employers in 1st quarter 2010 that would provide shared training by multiple organizations, reducing costs and utilizing resources.



Manufacturers Appreciation Day: Lt. Governor Lee Fisher and the SMART (Successful Manufacturers Achieve Success Together) Team that planned and hosted the event

Innovative Training by Area Employers

Challenging times have created innovative solutions by area manufacturers, providing their organizations with a competitive edge and much more.

Although local manufacturers have been training employees for years, the past 16 months have presented additional challenges in workforce development: Limited funding sources and the difficulty of having to do more with less to stay competitive.

A number of local companies have received training grants in 2009, which was one way they have addressed the situation.

Gyrus ACMI, Norwalk Custom Order Furniture, EPIC Technologies, David Price Metal Services, CVG Mayflower and Janesville Acoustics are just a few that utilized training programs and grant dollars over the past year.

From Welding to Japanese Culture Classes, the training they've performed has been diversified and customized to their needs.

Some of the training that has been conducted over the past year:

- Japanese Culture
- Leadership
- Maintenance
- Computer Skills
- CAD Software Upgrades
- Train the Trainer
- Web-Based Faciliworks
- Welding Certifications
- Communication
- CNC Technical Training

Training Grants Awarded in 2009

In 2009, NEDC continued to assist local businesses with accessing training grant dollars to strengthen their workforce. Companies in the Norwalk area were awarded training grants from the Ohio Department of Development, Huron County Job and Family Services, Targeted Industry Grants (TIG), and the pilot Training Workers to Advance (TWA) Grant. It is estimated that area companies were awarded over \$300,000 in 2009.

The original TWA program was funded by the State of Ohio and available to nine counties in North Central Ohio and administered by North Central State College. In Huron County, Janesville Acoustics and RR Donnelly were approved for grants.

The program wrapped up in 1st quarter 2009 and recently applied for an additional \$600,000, to be available to a four county area which includes Huron County. The program just received final approval for funding and area partners will identify the process for applying for funds by the end of November.

Business & Education Partnerships

EHOVE and other area education and business partners continued to help prepare the region's future workforce through the *Workforce 2015 Committee* this past year.

This group was created to explore ways to meet the workforce and education needs of regional businesses and citizens, for today and for the future.

This year EHOVE hosted a workshop that invited area Health Care employers and educators together to discuss the challenges and opportunities the next few years represent in regards to staffing needs in this industry.

The workshop was well attended and brought many community members together, building a strong foundation of Business & Education collaboration in Health Care.

Economic Development Partnerships



Regional Collaboration Promotes Development of Runway at NASA Plum Brook

In 2009, public and private community stakeholders in Huron and Erie Counties worked together to promote the development of the NASA Plum Brook Station.

*A shroud being tested in the Space Power Facility.
Credit: NASA*



In April 2009, several area representatives visited Huntsville, Alabama to view that area's development and determine how Huron and Erie Counties can work together to implement a regional strategy for success that starts from supporting NASA Plum Brook Station's runway needs.

NASA Plum Brook Station leaders and Erie County stakeholders have held numerous community and leadership tours throughout the Sandusky campus.

The Norwalk Area-Huron County Chamber of Commerce, NEDC and Main Street boards have also scheduled formal tours of NASA's Plum Brook station to increase awareness and gain support for the development of this extremely valuable regional resource.

In 2009, Huron and Erie counties received a Regional Collaboration grant from the Ohio Department of Development. This \$80,000 grant funded a feasibility study for a new proposed regional airport in proximity to NASA's Plum Brook station. Coordinated by NEDC, the grant emphasized the necessity of the two counties to investigate the potential that lies with the expansion of NASA's 9,000 acre campus at Plum Brook in Sandusky, which notably contains the world's largest vacuum chamber. Plum Brook Station's opportunity for future contracts and operations are hindered by the lack of a nearby runway of necessary length to land airplanes carrying space and aviation

equipment. The development of the runway and the facility would also provide opportunities to attract companies in the aerospace and aviation industries.

Bowling Green State University conducted the feasibility study and released the findings in a report finalized this fall, which stated the development would have an enormously positive impact on the regional economy and made recommendations on how the project could be governed. Requests for copies can be made to NEDC or HCDC.

Erie County applied this summer for a \$60,000,000 dollar national TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant, funded by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars. If awarded, this project would fund the construction of a 9,000 ft. runway and associated infrastructure improvements.

Tourism Grants in 2009

For the second year in a row, the partnership between the Norwalk Economic Development Corporation and Summit Motorsports Park was awarded grant dollars from the Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism.

The tourism marketing grants totaled over \$11,000 in 2009, putting the two year total close to \$31,000.

Summit Motorsports Park used the grant funds for event outreach literature to increase additional tourists and visitors to the community.

It is estimated that Summit's events in 2008 & 2009 brought in around 500,000 visitors to the Norwalk area.



Summit Motorsports Park

Inventive Rail Spur Project Awarded \$220,000



New Horizons Baking Company

In July 2009, the Norwalk Rail Spur Project was awarded the \$220,000 in grant dollars and financing from the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Rail Development Commission. Huron County's 'Industrial Site Improvement Fund (ISIF)' award was the only project funded in the surrounding nine-county area. The funds complemented the substantial financial match by New Horizons.

These funds will enable New Horizons Baking Company to have one of their largest commodities delivered via rail and transported into the plant through an innovative blower and vacuum system.

NEDC, HCDC's Board President and Director Alex Beres, New Horizons' VP of Sales Mike Porter, Huron County Commissioners and the City of Norwalk's Mayor worked together in a short timeframe to apply for the grant dollars.

Norwalk Community Investigates Alternative Energy Options

Private and Public Partnership Funds Norwalk Wind Study

Utilizing renewable resources while combating high energy costs is something many communities and businesses are considering. Private and public partners in the Norwalk area are now taking action to determine the viability of Wind as an alternative energy source.



Several months ago, the team at PIPO and Highway Composites, along with engineer and former commissioner Ralph Fegley, decided to investigate the viability of Wind Energy. Realizing a formal 12-18 month study needed to be conducted in order to truly assess the capability and potential energy production of wind in the area, they started looking at possible solutions, envisioning a Wind Study for Norwalk. This fall their idea will turn into a reality.

After months of research, the group expanded and these stakeholders determined a study was needed to not only assess the power capabilities of wind in Norwalk, but to also provide data. If favorable wind conditions for power generation are found, this data can be used to apply for grant dollars or to identify the correct turbine size for maximum production.

Several area businesses, along with the City of Norwalk, are stepping up to fund the Wind Study. NEDC will oversee the study portion of the project.

The cost of the project will be nearly \$30,000, which is more than \$8,000 less than originally quoted, thanks to the generous contribution of the tower by the city of Clyde. This amount includes the physical installation of the MET tower, the monitoring of it for the duration of the contract and the analyzed data, trends and recommendations by the consultants.

The final review of proposals is now taking place, and the group hopes to have the tower up by December. The MET Tower will be located on the property of PIPO/Highway Composites.

State Programs Target Energy Efficiency

For the past year, many businesses have been reducing costs any way they can. Specific attention has been paid to reducing energy consumption. The State of Ohio has shown tremendous support with its proactive stance on energy efficiency and implementing the programs to support their initiatives.

From energy audits (provided at either no or reduced cost) to sizable grant programs focused at energy efficiency, 2009 was full of more incentives to "Go Green" than ever before.

The state just finished issuing RFPs (Requests for Proposals) for a Wind Deployment Grant and a Targeting Industry Efficiency Grant. Both of these programs were funded by stimulus dollars and offered grants ranging from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000—both asking for a minimum project cost of \$500,000 (50% match required). As appealing as the grants were, because stimulus dollars were involved, projects had to be nearly "shovel ready" with funding and project plans in place.

The two new programs offered this year as well as the returning programs gave area businesses the possibility to apply for enormous amounts of grant dollars. Despite the limitations of the dollars, most employers were grateful for the chance to pursue them.

A number of companies in the Norwalk area are either participating in energy audits or have submitted applications for the above grants. Grant awards in most cases will be announced by the end of the year.

Norwalk Green Team & Earth Week 2009

The Norwalk area Green Team has continued in its mission and success over the past year, hosting the Earth Week activities and the Green Fair. Some of the highlights of the group in 2009 were meeting Daryl Stockburger, considered the "Pioneer" of the Bowling Green Community Wind project, and investigating renewable energy sources to determine how they can be used in the Norwalk Community.

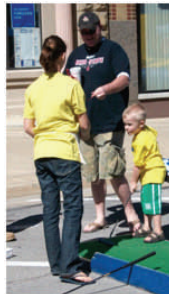
The group continues to investigate ways to make Norwalk "greener," and is already preparing plans for the next Earth Week celebration, with many new ideas to enhance it and build on the team's past success.

Main Street Norwalk Launches Shop Local Campaign

Shop Local First—The Buck Stays Here!

Supported by a grant from the Fund for Huron County, Main Street Norwalk, the Norwalk-Huron County Chamber of Commerce and the Norwalk Economic Development Corporation are working together to roll out “**Shop Local First...The Buck Stays Here!**” - a Shop Local initiative.

The launch of the **Shop Local Challenge** is the first part of a multi-tiered program designed to educate local consumers on the impact that their shopping habits can have in the local community. The Shop Local Challenge is asking patrons to shop 10 different Norwalk area, independently owned businesses between now and December 14th, 2009. Each time they make a purchase, they are to collect a stamp on their Shop Local Challenge Card. Once they have completed the card, it may be turned in for a drawing for one of ten \$25.00 Chamber of Commerce Gift Certificates. A second tier will roll out in early 2010 which will include a challenge for local businesses to look at local suppliers for their needs. More information on the project may be found on the Main Street Norwalk website, www.mainstreetnorwalk.org.



Over 10 youth volunteers in the children area at the Autumn Leaves Festival

Volunteer Hours Reach Record High in 2009

Main Street Norwalk showcased the Uptown District with three quality events to date in 2009; **Norwalk's Great American Treasure Hunt**, **National Night Out 2009—America's Night Out Against Crime**, and the **Norwalk Autumn Leaves Festival**.

November will bring us the Light Up Norwalk holiday kick off event which will feature the theme of “giving back.” With these events and the additional projects, the program has logged over 1000 volunteer hours to date. In 2008 and 2007 figures show a little over 400 hours per year.

The **volunteer hours tripled in 2009** compared to 2008, thanks to our amazing adult and youth volunteers and the proactive new Main Street Manager Kristie Wert. Their dedication contributes enormously to the success of the Main Street Program and events.

Community partnerships and volunteers continue to play a major role in the support and growth of the Main Street Program and Uptown District businesses.



Board President Doug Berry and Board member Lynn Bolden-Moser gather pies for the Pie Auction at the Autumn Leaves Festival.

Five New Businesses Open In the Uptown District



Jennifer Saunders, Owner of Bargain Bin— one of five new businesses that opened in 2009

A major focus of the Main Street Norwalk Program is to assist new and expanding businesses in the Uptown Norwalk Historic District. We are pleased that five new businesses now call the Uptown District home.

Our uptown area has seen great growth in 2009, starting with the addition of the **Sears** store on East Main Street and the relocation of **White's Automotive** to Whittlesey Street. **Stickman II**, a videogame specialty shop, opened its doors in April, offering a variety of new and used games and game systems. May brought us the new restaurant, **The UpTown Café** and also the **Bargain Bin**, which offers a variety of surplus new merchandise from department stores.

With potential new business owners inquiring about starting up in the Uptown District on a regular basis, this is a tremendous testimonial about the strength of the Norwalk area and the appeal of being a part of the Uptown District.

Norwalk Economic Development Corporation Investors

As a 501 c(3) non-profit corporation, the Norwalk Economic Development Corporation depends on the 59 companies, institutions and individuals investing in our operations with a three-year pledge in one of six annual pledge categories.

A special thanks to all of our investors:

Platinum+ (\$50,000+)

City of Norwalk
Norwalk Community Development Corporation

Platinum (\$5,000)

Anonymous Donor
Citizens Banking Company
Croghan Colonial Bank
Fisher-Titus Medical Center
Janesville Acoustics
Janotta & Herner, Inc.
National City Bank

Gold (\$2,500)

Norweco, Inc.
Summit Motorsports Park
Payne, Nickles & Company
Norwalk Reflector

Silver (\$1,000)

Robert G. Andrews
BGSU Firelands

Firelands Federal Credit Union
Epic Technologies
Home Savings & Loan
Kaiser-Wells Pharmacy & Homecare
Key Bank

Lions Club
Maple City Rubber
Mark Schaffer Excavating & Trucking
New Horizons Baking Company
North Central Care Net Ltd.
Norwalk Area-Huron County Chamber of Commerce

Norwalk Concrete Industries
Gaymont Nursing Center
Walker Funeral Home
William Dauch Concrete Co., Inc.
Patrick J. Martin

Bronze (\$500)

Appraisal Service, Inc.
Battle's Insurance Agency, Inc.
Berry's Restaurant
Don Tester Ford
Evans Funeral Home

K&J Flickinger Insurance Agency, Inc.
Lake Erie Construction
Custom Metal Works
Ewell & Associates
Ellen Heinz

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Durable Corporation
Sheri's Coffee House
The Hen House
Hill's Interiors, Inc.
R.J. Beck Protective Systems
Home Lumber Company
Susan S. Lesch
Bethany J. Dentler
Schild's IGA SuperCenter
Stephen P. Zigo, AIA
RE/MAX Quality Realty
Nobil's Sports & Trophies
Century 21 Mike Myers Realty, Inc.
Edward Jones Investments

2009 NEDC Award Winners



Golden Maple Award

NEDC's Board of Directors chose four worthy companies to receive a *Golden Maple Business Achievement Award* in 2009. The winners made significant capital investments, created new jobs, built new facilities or made important community contributions to Norwalk:

New Horizons Baking Company
Maple City Ice
Gardner's SuperValu Foods
FriendShip Food Store



New Horizons Baking Company



Maple City Ice



Gardner's SuperValu Foods



FriendShip Food Store

The first Annual *Pushing the Envelope Award* was given to an individual who has been an outstanding advocate of businesses and Norwalk area economic development at the local, state and federal levels: *Mayor Sue Lesch*

Company	New Square Footage	New/Retained Employees	Estimated Investment
New Horizons Baking Company	8,800	—	\$4,000,000
FTMC	—	102	\$3,000,000
Bob Evans Restaurant	5,000	70	\$1,825,000
Anonymous	—	—	\$1,000,000
FriendShip Food Store	7,200	20	\$600,000
Anonymous	—	—	\$500,000
Maple City Ice	12,000	2	\$350,000
Gardner's SuperValu Foods	—	6	\$300,000
Americraft Carton	—	1	\$250,000
Aaron's	8,000	7	\$200,000
White's Automotive	9,000	5	\$200,000
Summit Motorsports Park	—	—	\$175,000
Norwalk C. O. Furniture	—	34	N/A
Norwalk Industrial Properties	—	—	\$125,000
Baumann Auto Group	—	—	\$90,000
EPIC Technologies	—	—	\$75,000
National City/PNC	600	—	\$40,000
Stickman II	1,000	1	\$28,000
Finance Service of Norwalk	1,500	5	\$25,000
Up Town Café	2,000	12	\$20,000
LinDale M Broidery	—	—	\$20,000
K-Mart	—	6	\$20,000
Bargain Bin	1,100	2	\$10,000
Sears	12,000	4	N/A

Four County Partnership Promotes Regionalism and Considers Funding Opportunities

NEDC has been involved with a four county effort to develop a regional CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy). This team is led by Ohio Department of Development Regional Economic Development Director Herm Stine and is composed of area Economic Development and planning professionals from Huron, Richland, Crawford and Ashland counties.

A four-County CEDS has been developed and the next charge of the team is to use this tool to apply for national grant dollars to help put the plan into action. This regional CEDS is extremely important as it is a critical element to further developing our regional economy and applying for grant dollars to assist in this process.

A regional revolving loan fund is one of the possibilities this group is looking into and may seek to fund it through grant dollars. These loan dollars would be a valuable resource for new or expanding businesses.

NEDC Mission Statement

As a public-private partnership, the Norwalk Economic Development Corporation's mission is to identify and capitalize on opportunities to continuously improve the Norwalk area's business base. Our responsibilities are to:

- Encourage the creation of quality employment
- Support the growth of existing businesses and entrepreneurs
- Pursue new business locations through organized promotion and marketing efforts
- Work collaboratively with local businesses, institutions and economic development partners to strengthen Norwalk's position in the global economy

Norwalk Economic Development Corporation

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