
DOWNTOWN DIGEST

Warren, Ohio

December 2014

Was That a Crane on Market Street?

The behind-the-scenes work at the Tech Belt Energy Innovation Center is finally becoming visible in a big way. It's been impossible not to notice the construction taking place in the building many remember from their youth, Kresge's, the five-and-dime located at 125 W. Market. Penny candies seem like a distant memory as the building is currently being transformed into a multi-million dollar state-of-the-art tech incubator, but interestingly enough, many historical elements will remain inside the 39,000 square foot facility. Architects from the local firm Phillips/Sekanick Architects, Inc. (Just down the street from the center... #supportlocal), have meticulously preserved as much of the historic architecture as possible that remained within the nearly blank box space.

This inclusion of our history also allowed for a helpful financial offset to the project, as the building was able to qualify for state and national historic tax credits.

Financing for the Tech Belt Energy Innovation Center, better known as TBEIC (pronounced "t-bike") has been no simple task. Although allocated a \$2.2 million dollar grant in 2009, the funds could only be accessed on a matching dollar-for-dollar basis. Initial TBEIC staff members were hired to begin establishing the program, but the physical infrastructure had to be delayed- until now.

Perhaps a blessing in disguise, the time it took to break ground for the building has allowed the TBEIC team to develop relationships and prospective tenants from around the country, although their focus is primarily regional. Even without a facility, TBEIC chief executive of regional operations Dave Nestic and its chief executive for national relations, Chris Mather, have assisted approximately 50 energy-related companies by generating more than \$2 million in investments and grants to support the development of energy-innovation and clean-technology areas, such as fuel cells, solar and wind power and water.

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Photo Credit: Boko Photo

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Energy-innovation is a sector of unending development opportunities and the new facility on Market has the ability to serve as the catalyst for life-changing inventions. Nestic provided a few examples: today's solar energy systems are only 15% efficient, leaving much room for improvement; our current day electrical grid must be updated in the upcoming decades to support growing energy needs; and technologies for clean water are necessary anywhere from cracker plants to municipalities. We need fresh minds working to solve these and many other modern problems, and TBEIC will offer the equipment and business networks to create the jobs for people who can solve them.

The facility offers more than a dozen spaces that can be rented for as low as \$500/month.

Being within the physical incubator network allows for shared equipment, office resources, access to industry professionals and business networks, and test houses operated by licensed technicians. There are multiple conference rooms and state-of-the-art equipment for professional presentations and fast wifi connections. Entrepreneurs may access areas such as the ground-level floor of the facility's south end for industrial research, or utilize the open-space mezzanine to create a mini-grid or test fuel cells. Being a new incubator, the TBEIC leadership team is very cognizant of the need to be nimble, responding to the needs of tenants. The space is designed to be flexible, so innovators can be as creative as needed and equipment can be purchased upon demand.

The certificate of occupancy for the space is anticipated by December 31st, which means beginning in 2015, Market Street will boast another success, this time showing once and for all the Rust Belt- like Kresge's- is a memory of the past. It's time to welcome the Tech Belt.

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Upcoming Events

Les Jolies Femmes Grand Opening Reception

Jolies Femmes, 192 E. Market

Wednesday, December 3, 5-7 pm

Grand opening reception at Jolies Femmes

Christmastime in the City

Courthouse Square, Downtown Warren

Friday, December 5th, 5-8 pm

Meet Santa Clause and enjoy a sleigh ride at Courthouse Square! There will be a "Cookie Crawl", pet-able nativity, Bookmobile and more. Tree lighting begins at 5 pm.

5 Grands Boutique Holiday Extravaganza

5 Grands Fashions, 367 High St. NE

Thursday, December 11th, beginning at 5pm

Enjoy a fabulous ladies' night out at this Holiday Extravaganza. In addition to door prizes and shopping specials, customers will enjoy complimentary hors d'oeuvres, and may opt for a massage, facial or manicure from licensed professionals.

The Polar Express: A Magical Brunch Experience

Hippodrome, 150 High St.

Saturday, December 13th, 9:30 am and 12:30 pm

The Hippodrome Ballroom will transform into a whimsical and wonderful atmosphere where you will enjoy this interactive and lively experience that is filled with all of your favorite Polar Express music and moments. Tickets can be purchased at Mocha House.

"Coming Home" Art Exhibit Opening

DNA Studios, LLC., 137 S. Park Ave.

Saturday, December 13th, 6-10 pm

"Coming Home" solo exhibition featuring artist Brian Hall, who had a studio on the Square in the early 80s. Wine and light refreshments will be served.

"Office Merrymaking" Fundraiser

National Packard Museum. 1899 Mahoning Ave. NW

Thursday, December 18th, 6-9 pm &

Friday, December 19th, 11 am-2 pm

The "Office Merrymaking" fundraiser is meant to invoke a "holiday celebration reminiscent of the workplace Christmas parties of yesteryear." The evening celebration will feature local duet Take II, and the brunch is to feature Mary Jo Maluso and Rick Blackson.

Lime Tree Sandwich Gallery Performances and Poetry

187 W. Market St.

Every Tuesday, 5:30-8:30 pm

Gary Pirrung

3rd Wednesday of the Month (December 17th), 7 pm

Poetry Night

Saturday, December 6th, 7-10 pm

Baxter Burgandy

Saturday, December 20th, 7-10 pm

The Pickups

TO INCLUDE YOUR EVENT IN THE UPCOMING DIGEST,
CONTACT INFO@WARRENBUSINESSEXCHANGE.COM

Sneak Peek: Veteran's Services Building, coming soon to Market Street



WBE Member Businesses in 2014

Patriot Homecare, Inc. is a home health care enterprise that provides quality short-term skilled homecare. This veteran-owned business is certified by both state and federal accrediting agencies and is Medicare approved. Owner Greg Davis states that they will “end the year around \$1.8 million in sales, eclipsing last year.” If you or anyone you know may benefit from in-home health services, such as physical therapy, please contact Patriot at patriothc@gmail.com.

Mamula Contracting, LLC is a female-owned general contracting company specializing in commercial and industrial projects. In the past year alone, the company has created more than 25 full and part-time job opportunities. Mamula’s team of employees have diversified expertise on projects large and small, working with hospitals, military bases, apartment complexes, factories, retail stores and even local mom-and-pops. The company projects business activity of more than \$1.2 million this year. If you are in need of a commercial contractor, contact Mamula at (330) 240-8007.

The Novis Group, LLC is a consulting firm that specializes in assisting non-profit organizations with their fundraising campaigns. Novis was founded by John Bentz in 2010 and has recently added another full-time and part-time employee. A project they are most proud of is the recent campaign they launched for Stuart’s Opera House in Nelsonville, Ohio. This client just publically announced its campaign - the original goal was \$2.5 million, but they have just raised just over \$3.1 million to date. If you are a nonprofit organization that needs assistance with fundraising and development, contact Novis at jbentz@thenovisgroup.com.

Warren Business Exchange, a resource for local entrepreneurs

The Warren Business Exchange, a program of Warren Redevelopment and Planning Corporation, recognizes that small businesses are the economic driver within the city and offers free business-support services to local entrepreneurs. Although established as an in-house business incubator, recently we have expanded our advising and evaluation services to include existing businesses in the Warren area. If you are an area business owner or employee and need assistance with finances, marketing, needs assessment or just have a general question, call (330)841-2566 or email info@thewarrenbusinessexchange.com.

Additionally, we would appreciate any feedback you may have to improve information sharing within our new monthly Downtown Digest series.



Coming in January

The former Mickey’s Army Navy site is being transformed into Eastern Gateway Community College, which will be renovated in time for the start of the semester: January 12, 2015.