



**E·C·G·R·A**  
ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT  
FOR  
NOVEMBER  
2024**



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ECGRA Communications Services Report

October 2024

**BiWeekly Meeting with Executive Director**

**Ongoing Social Media Management**

**Ongoing Consulting**

**Oct. Comms**

**IMPLEMENTED**

October social media posts  
2 new graphics created in October  
PFT Grant Award Event Photography  
BiWeekly planning meeting with Executive Director

Harborcreek HERT-237 MMA – grant awards  
Media advisory and pitching  
Press Event  
Press release and distribution

Parks Fields and Trails – grant awards  
Media advisory and pitching  
Press Event  
Press release and distribution  
Grant recipient graphics

**IN PROGRESS | 2024 Grant Releases and Graphics**

2023–2024 Annual Report graphics

Anchor Building – grant awards  
Media advisory and pitching  
Press Event  
Press release and distribution  
Grant recipient graphics

Holiday Graphics

Brand guide updates to - #ECGRAworks content from grant recipients

**IN PLANNING**

Fall event planning /scheduling (First Assent, Lead Assets, Redevelopment Authority)





## **ECGRA IMPROVES PARKS, FIELDS AND TRAILS**

***GRANT DESIGNED TO IMPROVE ERIE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS***

**NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS\*\*\*NEWS**

For Immediate Release: October 22, 2024

**CONTACT: Sam Peterson**  
[peterson@kateco.com](mailto:peterson@kateco.com)  
814.403.0907 | mobile

**ERIE, PA (October 22, 2024)** – Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) awarded \$159,232 of funding to 2023 Parks, Fields and Trails grant recipients.

“I can’t think of anything more important than investing in green spaces around Erie County,” said ECGRA Executive Director Perry Wood. “Investing in green spaces means supporting health, family, beautification, tourism and local business all at once.”

Erie County health assessments continue to show a decline in physical activity and an increase in preventable illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes. Investment in parks, fields, and trails can encourage healthy lifestyles, promote equitable distribution of park opportunities, and attract athletic competitions enhancing local tourism. Additionally, an investment in parks can help rejuvenate neighborhoods and Main Streets throughout Erie County.

“This ECGRA grant will help the community take advantage of the abundant, unique and powerful resources Erie County offers,” said Erie Maritime Foundation Vice President Vince Nientimp.

Below are the 2023 Parks, Fields and Trails Grant recipients:

PRESS RELEASE

Organization	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Asbury Woods Partnership	Interactive Trail Map & Kiosk	\$6,650.00	\$6,650.00
Bayfront Eastside Taskforce	Community Garden Pavilion	\$12,500.00	\$12,500.00
Borough of Edinboro	Edinboro Lake Recreation 2024	\$13,000.00	\$13,000.00
Erie Maritime Foundation	Community Sailing & Boating Program	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Fairview Township	Pleasant Ridge Park Pickleball Courts	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Greenfield Township	Multi-Use Court with ADA Access; Fencing, benches, tables, landscaping	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Impact Corry	Construction of Corry Junction Greenway Trail	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
McKean Recreation Authority	Youth Athletic Field Development	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Platea Borough	Platea Borough Park Equipment Replacement	\$2,082.00	\$2,082.00

The Parks, Fields and Trails Grant was launched as an impact investment towards the quality of place in Erie County. It promotes well-being, fosters civic pride, drives tourism and attracts, retains, and mobilizes creative talent and innovative businesses through cultural, heritage, service, and recreational organizations and projects. Currently, grant and endowment funds are at work for Lead Assets and Special Events, Community Assets.

The 2024 ECGRA Parks, Fields and Trails Grant was just recently closed. It will be awarded on November 21 with a public announcement coming soon.

An impact investing organization, ECGRA's mission is to empower the nonprofit sector, municipal governments, and economic development agencies to revitalize Erie County. ECGRA is endowed with local share gaming revenue from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania via the Horse Race Gaming Act. Local share gaming revenue is an assessment of the licensed gambling industry in Pennsylvania. ECGRA administers local share gaming revenue on behalf of Erie County government.

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## Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

Wednesday, October 30, 2024  
11:00am – 1:00pm  
5240 Knowledge Parkway  
Erie, PA 16510

### AGENDA

1. Parks, Fields, and Trail applications
  - 7 Applications
  
2. Multi-Municipal Collaboration applications
  - 2 applications
  
3. ARPA Budget Modification
  
4. Good of the Order

PRESS RELEASE



**ECGRA AWARDS GRANT FOR ANCHOR BUILDINGS IN ERIE COUNTY**

**\*\*\*RELEASE\*\*\* RELEASE\*\*\* RELEASE\*\*\* RELEASE\*\*\* RELEASE\*\*\* RELEASE\*\*\***

For Immediate Release: November 12, 2024

CONTACT: Sam Peterson  
[peterston@kateco.com](mailto:peterston@kateco.com)  
814.403.0907 | mobile

**ERIE, PA** (November 12, 2024) – The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) announced the recipients of the 2024 Anchor Building grant today. The Anchor Building grant is awarded to a non-profit or municipal entity in Erie County. Funds are used to revitalize structures of historical, architectural or social significance in communities.

“Investing in anchor buildings simultaneously preserves and improves Erie County,” said ECGRA Executive Director Perry Wood, “The revitalization and stabilization of these buildings directly impacts our neighborhoods and communities by reinvigorating main streets, boosting small businesses, and combatting blight.”

The Anchor Building Grant Program is an adaptive re-use funding program. Anchor Building provides funding to enable local governments, 501(c)3 non-profits, and municipal authorities to strengthen a community, neighborhood, or commercial district by redeveloping, enhancing, and preserving an underutilized or vacant building that has the potential to serve as a catalyst for greater investment and commercial or social activity.

The recipients are:

Organization	Project Title	Amount Recommended
Borough of Union City	Anchor Building - City Building	\$75,000.00
Explore the Possibilities	St. John's Church to Early Learning Center & Special Needs Community Resource Center	\$100,000.00
Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society	Historic Eagle Hotel Preservation Project	\$70,000.00

PRESS RELEASE

Greater Erie Community Action Committee	1006 Revitalization Project	\$50,000.00
Impact Corry	City Center Railroad Freight Building to Brew Pub & Event Venue	\$100,000.00
North East Community Foundation	Gibson Street Renovation	\$50,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$445,000.00</b>

“ECGRA dollars have helped us to rehab and preserve this beautiful space allowing us to serve the community by offering high-quality early childhood education and programming opportunities for children and adults of all abilities, in a central location,” said Executive Director of Explore The Possibilities Jamie Matson, “The investment of ECGRA funds in buildings like ours allows us to focus on what we do best.”

Most often, historic buildings located in the heart of the community are anchor buildings with intrinsic historical, architectural, and/or social qualities that make places special or unique. Similarly, these buildings can be adaptively re-used due to the quality of original construction, location, and/or suitability for new uses. Unfortunately, communities find that these older buildings are difficult to re-use due to construction costs relative to new building codes, lack of financial resources, or appraisal values that do not support local lenders making an investment.

ECGRA funding can serve as a vital part of the financing structure to bridge the gap, boost the real estate market, assist in developing equity, and enhance the quality of place.

One previous success story is the rehabilitation of the downtown building 28 PA-5 on the corner of State St. and 12<sup>th</sup> St. ECGRA funding helped to revitalize an iconic structure that is now thriving with several tenants, helping to reinvigorate downtown Erie and generate economic impact.

An impact investing organization, ECGRA's mission is to empower the nonprofit sector, municipal governments, and economic development agencies to revitalize Erie County. ECGRA is endowed with local share gaming revenue from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania via the Horse Race Gaming Act. Local share gaming revenue is an assessment of the licensed gambling industry in Pennsylvania. ECGRA administers local share gaming revenue on behalf of Erie County government.

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***Child Care Crisis in Erie***  
***Thursday, November 14, 2024***  
***3:00 pm***

**Current State of Affairs in Child Care**

Elana Como, CEO NWIR, Inc.

**Workforce Support Funding**

- I. Mike Plazony, Early Learning Investment Commission/BOD Early Connections
- II. David Gonzales, CEO St. Martin's Center
- III. Jill Simmons, VP of Youth Development, YMCA of Greater Erie
- IV. Hannah Cowan, Finance Early Connections
- V. Daryl Dambaugh, Director Early Connections City Center

**Funding for Quality Resources and Increasing Access for all Children**

- I. Kathy Bastow, Early Education Director, Barber National Institute

**Infrastructure Funding**

- I. Tiffany Lavette, CEO ABC 24-hour Child-Care Center
- II. Kenya Johnson, CEO Learning Ladder
- III. Steve Krivonak, Development Director JAM Team Foundation
- IV. Rina Irwin, CEO Child Development Centers

**Closing Remarks**

Elana Como





Perry + ECGRA Board,

We wanted to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support through your special events grant process.

This past weekend we hosted our annual Community Fall Fest and HarborCREEPS. We had over 1000 people for Fall Fest and over 1500 for HarborCREEPS. Your grant helped to support both of these events and impacted so many people from our community.

Once again, thank you + we look forward to our continued collaboration.

Warm Regards,  
HC Community Engagement Team

# Revitalizing downtown Corry one façade at a time

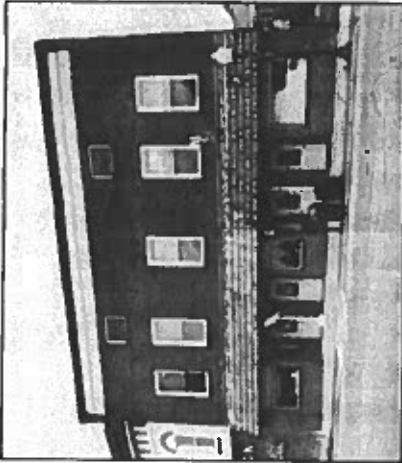
BY CAROL FIELDING  
carof@thecorryjournal.com

The Mission Main Street program, funded by the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA), is making significant strides in revitalizing Corry's downtown core through façade renovations and other economic development initiatives.

The program, which requires a minimum dollar-for-dollar match from applicants, has been a driving force in leveraging community investment to achieve greater impact.

As explained by Chuck Gray, executive director of Impact Corry, "Requiring matching funds is a way for applicants to show that their communities have skin in the game, and also a way for donated funds to be leveraged by other funders to achieve even more work in the communities they serve."

Impact Corry is a nonprofit organization focused on sup-

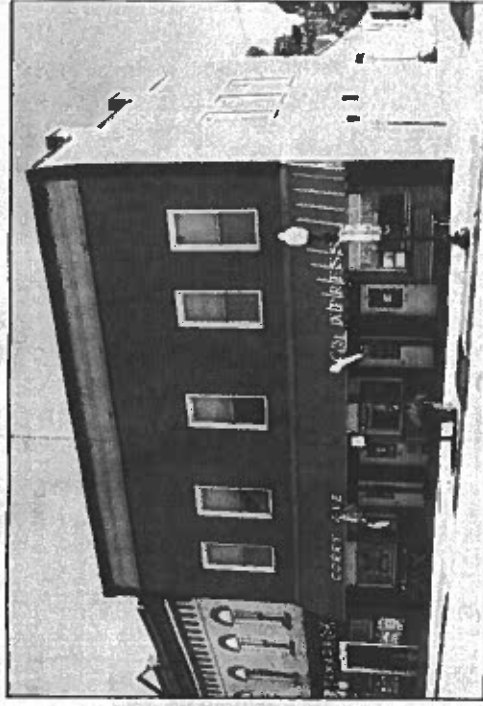


Contributed photo  
This building at 130 and 132 N. Center St. was part of the first round of Mission Main Street façade renovation. Above is a photo before façade renovation in 2019; at right, after renovation.

porting community, economic and civic development. The first request for Mission Main Street funding was made in 2019. The three-year program included façade renovation grants, as well as funding for initiatives like entrepreneur

programs and television production of Corry businesses.

"We applied for three-year Mission Main Street funding from ECGRA in the spring of 2019," Gray explained. "We received the award in October of 2019. Unfortunately,



Carol Fielding/The Corry Journal

William "Buzz" Hammond, Erin Brown and Melissa Swartzfager, and Al Ger-novich, pastor of Salt Church, which received façade renovation as a nonprofit.

◀ See Downtown, P.2

The Corry Journal • [www.thecorryjournal.com](http://www.thecorryjournal.com)

Saturday, October 19, 2024

## Downtown

(Continued from front page)

The façade renovation matching funds application process was designed to be inclusive, with both property owners and tenants (with landlord approval) able to apply. A unique aspect was the use of a \$250 processing fee to hire a local designer to work with applicants on renderings of their proposed renovations, as well as to cover staff time.

To ensure fairness, properties were prioritized, with single-building owners placed at the top of the list and multiple-property owners at the bottom. A collaborative meeting was held to determine the order of projects for the latter group.

While the initial round of funding was a success, the demand for the façade improvement matching fund program was so strong, many owners remained on the waiting list while new

grant applications were submitted. Under then Executive Director Rick Norovny, the Corry Redevelopment Authority's (RDA) early support for Impact Corry's operations and project endorsements was crucial to the success of the façade renovation program, and other economic development efforts in the community. The RDA's financial support included funding the first three-and-a-half years of staff costs at Impact Corry.

"The Corry community has benefited from Impact Corry's work, made possible from 2019 through 2022 by the underwriting of the nonprofit's personnel costs by the Corry Redevelopment Authority, and the RDA's collaborative endorsement on efforts to apply for ECGRA funding," Gray said.

With the continued focus of Impact Corry, the community can look forward to further revitalization and economic growth through the Mission Main Street program and other initiatives.

The 2024 ECGRA Mission Main Street grant award was applied for by Impact Corry on Dec. 31, 2023. Impact Corry received \$125,000 in 2024 for façade grants and placemaking projects in historic downtown Corry. Of that total, \$79,280 is reserved for façade renovations, and \$45,720 is for the Corry Rails and Trails Park project.

A report from the first 10 years (2009-2019) details ECGRA's investments of more than \$56 million throughout Erie County. The investments have been transformative from an economic and community perspective. As a funder of community events and activities, and an influencer of new and innovative programs to stimulate Erie County's economy, ECGRA has made an impact in Corry. Its 990 strategic investments in 244 Erie County organizations have generated an economic impact of \$128.4 million, supported 838 jobs and created \$4.6 million in state and local tax revenue. The report can be accessed at [ECGRA.org](http://ECGRA.org).

Advertisement

## **ECGRA awards grants to nine organizations to better green spaces**

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A.J. Rao

Erie Times-News

USA TODAY NETWORK

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The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority has awarded \$159,232 in grant funding to enhance local green spaces.

On Tuesday, ECGRA awarded nine recipients with its 2023 Parks, Fields and Trails grant, a program that ECGRA describes as an 'impact investment toward the quality of place in Erie County.'

'I can't think of anything more important than investing in green spaces around Erie County,' ECGRA Executive Director Perry Wood stated in a news release. 'Investing in green spaces means supporting health, family, beautification, tourism and local business all at once.'

The nine recipients were:

- Asbury Woods Partnership, awarded \$6,650 for an interactive trail map and kiosk;
- Bayfront Eastside Taskforce, awarded \$12,500 for community garden pavilion;
- Borough of Edinboro, awarded \$13,000 for Edinboro Lake Recreation 2024;
- Erie Maritime Foundation, awarded \$25,000 for Community Sailing and Boating program;
- Fairview Township, awarded \$25,000 for Pleasant Ridge Park pickleball courts;
- Greenfield Township, awarded \$25,000 for multi-use court with ADA access; fencing, benches, tables, landscaping;
- Impact Corry, awarded \$25,000 for construction of Corry Junction Greenway Trail;
- McKean Recreation Authority, awarded \$25,000 for youth athletic field development;
- Platea Borough, awarded \$2,082 for Platea Borough park equipment replacement.

'This ECGRA grant will help the community take advantage of the abundant, unique and powerful resources Erie County offers,' Erie Maritime Foundation Vice President Vince Nientimp stated in the release.

### **Previous ECGRA grant awards**

#### **Grant for new emergency vehicle in Harborcreek Township**

On Oct. 8, ECGRA awarded a \$34,000 grant to Harborcreek Township to support the purchase of a new emergency vehicle. The vehicle will go to the Harborcreek

Township Emergency Response Team, or HTERT-237, a multi-municipal collaboration between Brookside Fire Company, Fairview Hose Company and Harborcreek Fire Department.

The team, which was formed in 2012, provides first responder and EMT support during daytime hours when volunteer firefighters might not be available.

### **Grants to support arts, quality of place**

On June 5, ECGRA awarded \$435,721 to 70 nonprofits and municipalities as part of two quality of place grant programs.

The Special Events grant program awarded 45 recipients with a total of \$200,337. The Arts, Culture and Heritage grant program awarded 25 recipients with a total of \$235,383.

Special Events grant recipients included the Albion Area Fair and CAFE for its Celebrate Erie/Lights over Lake Erie.

Arts, Culture and Heritage grant program recipients included Erie's Black Wall Street for the Juneteenth Weekend Celebration and Messiah Lutheran Church for the Wesleyville Community Garden.

### **Grants to strengthen Erie community facilities**

On Feb. 13, ECGRA awarded nearly \$2 million in grants to 19 community facilities across the county.

The \$1.6 million in grant money, part of ECGRA's Building a Better Future program, aims to support capital improvements, programming and equipment at publicly accessible community centers.

These centers provide Erie County residents with basic health and well-being, job training, mentoring, education, nutrition and a host of other benefits, according to an ECGRA news release.

- Booker T. Washington Center: \$125,000
- Borough of Edinboro: \$25,000
- Boys & Girls Club of Erie: \$70,000
- Community Shelter Services: \$105,694
- Corry Higher Education Council: \$59,500
- Eagle's Nest Leadership Corporation: \$125,000
- Edinboro Market: \$125,000
- GECAC: \$13,680
- Inner-City Neighborhood Art House: \$125,000
- International Institute of Erie: \$125,000

- John F. Kennedy Center: \$125,000
- Journey: Healing Together: \$25,000
- Martin Luther King Center: \$125,000
- Mercy Center for Women: \$100,000
- Mercy Hilltop Center: \$99,000
- Northwestern Community Youth Center: \$18,500
- Sarah A. Reed Children's Center: \$86,000
- St. Martin Center, Inc.: \$75,000
- YMCA of Corry: \$97,331

### **Grants to spur neighborhood renewal, combat blight**

On Dec. 6, ECGRA awarded nearly \$400,000 in grants to two boroughs and two organizations in an effort to combat neighborhood blight.

The grants, part of the 2023 Renaissance Block Grant program, were awarded to the Bayfront Eastside Taskforce, which received \$50,000, and Impact Corry and the boroughs of Edinboro and Union City, which each received \$100,000.

Wood touted the grant program as a 'strategic approach to neighborhood renewal,' one that will help put money 'in the hands of homeowners to revitalize their houses.'

'The nonprofits and boroughs and the townships will work directly with residents one block at a time and try to fix up as many houses as possible, therefore creating a multiplier effect,' Wood said.

### **Grants to foster economic growth**

On June 27, 2023, ECGRA awarded more than \$600,000 in grant funding to five Erie County organizations working to spur economic growth in rural and minority communities.

The grant funding, which totaled \$630,750, is funded by American Rescue Plan dollars and administered by ECGRA as a part of its Building a Better Future program. The program awards grants to local transformative projects that seek to uplift the regional economy through job growth, local business development and strategic projects.

The recipients, all of which aim to use their grants toward supporting small business growth, were the following:

- \$200,000 to Bridgeway Capital
- \$175,000 to Impact Corry
- \$150,000 to the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- \$57,750 to Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network

- \$48,000 to Erie's Black Wall Street

Wood said the grants also represented 'forward steps toward inclusive entrepreneurship' to ensure funds reach stakeholders considered historically disadvantaged.

*A.J. Rao can be reached at [arao@gannett.com](mailto:arao@gannett.com). Follow him on X @ETNRao.*

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## **New Corry park will feature brew pub, performance space**

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Valerie Myers

Erie Times-News

USA TODAY NETWORK

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**CORRY** – A new \$887,000 grant will provide the remainder of funding needed to launch a downtown Corry park featuring a brew pub, performance space and splash pad.

The Appalachian Regional Commission Partnership for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization grant brings total first-phase funding for the Rails + Trails Park to almost \$2.4 million.

The park will be developed on 1.4 acres between 1st Avenue and Center Street and between two rail lines. Six-foot aluminum safety fencing will separate the park from the railroad tracks.

Impact Corry, which is leading park development, worked with the Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad to purchase the land and plan the project.

'What's been on paper for some years is becoming reality,' said Impact Corry Executive Director Chuck Gray.

### **Rails + Trails park amenities: towers, bike rentals, brewery**

The brew pub and performance space will be located in a former railroad freight building. The 2,500-square-foot building will be expanded for public use. A second former railroad building will house a welcome center with historic exhibits, concessions and bike rentals.

The 50-by-50-foot splash pad will include a spray pool.

The park also will include a portion of the Erie-Pittsburgh Trail and the terminus of the Erie-Corry Trail.

Totem-like gateway towers by artists Bradley Triana, Jessica Taylor and Nicholas Taylor will tell the story of the city's past, present and future. The 20-foot towers will be lighted from within and can be programmed for various colors and for the lights to react to music.

'The lights also can be static, maybe in the colors of the season,' Gray said.

An artisan bike rack is already nearing completion. It was designed by artist Wendy Neckers and created by metal artist Adam Stempka and features large grasshopper and katydid sculptures. The structure will be dedicated Nov. 1.

And parking will be expanded, both for park and other downtown events.

### **When will the rail trail park be finished?**



First-phase Rails + Trails Park development is expected to be completed by the end of 2026. Second-phase development will include a synthetic ice rink.

Park amenities were identified through a community survey in the Corry 2020 study. The park was identified as a priority in the Yard & Company Neighborhood Playbook developed with community members and in the 2021 Corry Community Strategic Plan.

It's also among shovel-ready projects in the investment playbook of Infinite Erie, a group working to position the community to attract more public and private-sector funding.

The Rails + Trails Park is expected to create 17 jobs and attract 10,400 new visitors to Corry annually.

Additional grants for the project include \$150,000 from the Erie Community Foundation and \$100,000 from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

Contact Valerie Myers at [vmyers@timesnews.com](mailto:vmyers@timesnews.com).

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## Tammi Michali

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**From:** Melinda Meyer <Programs@impactcorry.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 8:40 AM  
**To:** Melinda Meyer  
**Subject:** Presentation of artist-designed bike rack Friday, Nov. 1 at 5:30 pm

**External Sender - From:** (Melinda Meyer <Programs@impactcorry.com>)  
This message came from outside your organization.

[Learn More](#)

Downtown Corry is home to a new artist-designed bike rack - one that is connected to the larger Corry Rails + Trails Park development project.

**The artwork, which has been installed next to the EAST Corry Rails + Trails Park, will be celebrated and presented to the community Friday, November 1 at 5:30 pm from the east park as part of the Downtown Corry Business Association's First Fridays activities. (Just north of the intersection of Center and Main Streets.) We hope that you can join us!**

How did the artwork come to be? In 2022, Impact Corry issued a Call for Artists to respond to a design challenge for an artistic bike rack slated for installation along the Corry Rails + Trails Park EAST. The winning submission, which embraced the challenge's goals of creating a functional artwork with beauty and grit, was designed by local artist and store owner Wendy Neckers.

A year later, Erie metal artist Adam Stempka was contracted to bring Neckers' design to life. Stempka has 25-years-experience as an accomplished welder, which he combines with his artistic talent to create sculptures with fine details and precision.

The Friday event will include remarks from the artist, as well as project funders like the Corry Community Foundation and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

The artist-designed bike rack project was supported with funding and other assistance provided by the Corry Community Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, Corry Fabrication, and the City of Corry.

Melinda Meyer  
Director of Programs, Grants & Compliance  
4 South Center St., Corry  
E: [programs@impactcorry.com](mailto:programs@impactcorry.com)  
C: (814) 403-1772

# Union City marks 6 years of downtown revitalization

## FROM STAFF REPORTS

Six years of effort and the investment of \$2.2 million in Union City's downtown was marked last week with a 50-minute walking tour.

The walk with approximately 15 participants was organized by the Union City Community Foundation (UCCF) to show representatives of various other funding sources what the community has accomplished with their support, and to thank contractors that have done much of the work.

The participants gathered at the site of the former Union City Diner, at the intersection of Main and High streets, which since the work began in 2019 has been referred to as the downtown "gateway."

Representatives of the UCCF, Erie Community Foundation (ECF), Union City Borough, Preservation Erie and other entities, along with representatives of Union City-based Construction Services of Pennsylvania, which has done much of the downtown-related work, heard how the effort began from Steve Bishop, a project manager with the Union City Community Foundation.

Bishop noted the downtown revitalization actually began prior to 2019 through the efforts of Borough Manager Cindy Wells, who worked with the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) on downtown building facades and streetscaping, and with the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission to establish a downtown historic preservation plan.

Bishop said the efforts ramped up considerably in 2019 when the community was awarded a \$256,000 grant from the ECF's "Shaping Tomorrow" program, along with a follow-up \$250,000 Shaping Tomorrow grant from ECF three years later in 2022.

At the former diner site, Bishop described how the ECF funding kick-started a public gateway conceptualization process that has resulted in a transformation of that intersection. Changes have included removal of the diner, infilling the site and constructing a courtyard, a new entrance and stairway to the lower municipal parking lot, and exterior renovations to the adjoining building to give it a "diner-like look" as a tribute to the former diner.

◀ See Revitalization, P.2



Contributed photo  
At right, Union City Borough Manager Cindy Wells points out building facade improvements and other initiatives during a walking tour of the borough's downtown.

# Revitalization

(Continued from front page)

Across the street in the small "Industrial Park" pocket park, overgrown trees were removed, new brick piers and iron fencing installed to mirror the look of the nearby courtyard, a concrete sidewalk and pad poured, and an oversized wooden chair installed as a tribute to Union City's furniture-making heritage.

Following several public-input forums, three murals were also installed as a panorama across the gateway, with extensive wall restorations at those sites to accommodate the artwork. Bishop and Wells then led the tour south on Main Street to the new parking lot across from Union City Public Library, stopping along the way to point out restored building facades, historic markers, interpretive panels, sidewalk trees, the new downtown lighting initiative, a new gazebo and other projects.

The tour ended at the former Union City Chair property where future initiatives such as the planned "French Creek Trail" project were discussed, before a reception for the tour participants

at the nonprofit Main Street Art Center. UCCF Chairman Steve Jones addressed those in attendance, noting the foundation's initial involvement in the downtown initiatives came after former ECF President Mike Batchelor encouraged the boards of ECF's affiliate foundations in Union City, Corry, North East and Findley Lake to take a more proactive role in their communities.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to walk through the downtown with many of the partnering organizations that also shared the vision for positive enhancement to the community," Jones said. "The whole idea that the Union City Community Foundation was tasked with was a vision to help create and beautify the downtown to make Union City something we are all proud to call home."

"This is just a start, and we are building on many more projects to come in the future," Jones added. "We are blessed to have so many caring partners and community members. The future is exciting."