



# VOICE OF BUSINESS

## Region will emerge stronger after pandemic



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COVID-19 has impacted cities, metropolitan areas, businesses and economic growth around the world. However, the Dayton region's strong economic positioning before the coronavirus pandemic and our flexibility to adapt as a region uniquely positioned us for economic growth as we emerge from the pandemic next year.

Unfortunately, the Dayton area has been through community crises before. 2019 gave us an unanticipated master's degree in community crisis management that none of us were expecting. This experience, coupled with our strategic economic development continuity, gives the Dayton region a position of strength as we enter 2021 and look toward a future without COVID-19.

Economic investments have remained focused on the future: the renovations of the Dayton Arcade have infused an initial \$100 million into downtown Dayton. While the world managed the pandemic, this catalytic downtown Dayton economic project pressed on and should be completed in the first quarter of 2021. It will provide a one-of-a-kind entrepreneur support, coupled with higher education opportunities that are uniquely "Dayton."

DP&L's parent company, AES, is nearing completion of a \$20 million center of excellence, moving jobs from South America to the McGregor Park campus in Dayton. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base has continued to realize U.S. Department of Defense investments and the base is now boasting almost 35,000 jobs, a \$15 billion annual economic impact and status as the state's largest single site employer.

Developers are investing today on Monument Avenue, constructing a new high-rise apartment building. The Fireblocks development continues to recruit new businesses and opportunities and enhance the

### ECONOMIC INDICATORS

#### Residential Home Sales

	Sep '20	Sep '19	%Change	YTD '20	YTD '19	%Change
<b>Number of Homes Sold</b>	1705	1425	19.65%	12,662	12,561	0.8%
<b>Total Home Sales</b>	\$358,996,607	\$258,376,767	38.94%	\$2,471,234,447	\$2,222,527,849	11.19%
<b>Average Sale Price (\$)</b>	\$210,555	\$181,317	16.13%	\$195,169	\$176,939	9.41%

Source: Dayton Area Board of Realtors, Dayton Area Home Sales for September 2020

#### Sales Tax Collections

County	Current Rate	September 2020	September 2019	12 Mos Change	YTD 2020	YTD 2019	YTD Change
<b>Butler</b>	0.75	\$3,896,272	\$3,743,801	3.59%	\$32,963,370	\$33,632,560	-2.75%
<b>Clark</b>	1.5	\$2,287,095	\$1,910,098	11.41%	\$20,456,206	\$19,404,795	3.85%
<b>Darke</b>	1.5	\$855,207	\$726,991	3.80%	\$7,281,635	\$6,732,954	7.00%
<b>Greene</b>	1	\$2,436,094	\$2,462,292	6.46%	\$21,428,839	\$21,255,638	1.06%
<b>Miami</b>	1.25	\$1,712,315	\$1,567,253	23.69%	\$15,556,063	\$14,106,399	10.40%
<b>Montgomery</b>	1.25	\$8,783,418	\$8,315,053	6.02%	\$76,250,925	\$74,689,846	1.65%
<b>Preble</b>	1.5	\$596,050	\$383,806	14.80%	\$4,743,200	\$4,327,583	5.16%
<b>Warren</b>	1.25	\$4,818,429	\$4,646,735	-0.27%	\$41,573,093	\$41,168,186	0.64%
<b>Region Total</b>		<b>\$25,384,878</b>	<b>\$23,756,029</b>	<b>6.17%</b>	<b>\$220,253,332</b>	<b>\$215,317,961</b>	<b>1.73%</b>

Source: [http://www.tax.ohio.gov/tax\\_analysis/tax\\_data\\_series/sales\\_and\\_use/publications\\_tds\\_sales/S1M0920.aspx](http://www.tax.ohio.gov/tax_analysis/tax_data_series/sales_and_use/publications_tds_sales/S1M0920.aspx)

downtown Dayton landscape. CareSource recently quantified the impact of its national headquarters investment in downtown Dayton with an impressive \$1 billion annual impact, 4,400 jobs and \$22 million in state and local taxes.

Finally, last week the Ohio

General Assembly passed a long-anticipated state capital appropriations budget that will infuse more than \$18 million into economic development and quality-of-life projects throughout the greater Dayton region.

These projects, investments and continued

improvement are not by accident, but are the direct result of investor confidence, economic forecasting and a continued assurance that the Dayton region has a strong future for a direct return on their investments.

COVID-19 has equally impacted communities,

cities, states and countries across the globe. But our continued economic investments and community crisis management gives the Dayton region a unique opportunity to come out ahead as we evolve out of this pandemic. Dayton doesn't die – we just get better.

### DAYTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **Register for all events at** DaytonChamber.org.
- **Virtual Breakfast Briefing**, Jan. 8, 9 to 10 a.m. Topic: Current Mental Health of Our Community & Workforce. Speaker: Helen Jones-Kelley, ADAMHS Montgomery County executive director
- **Virtual Book Discussion for Professional Women**,

Jan. 14, 3:30 to 5 p.m. Topic: Facilitator-led discussion of four chosen books

■ **Virtual Leadership Dayton Information Breakfast**, Jan. 19, 8:30-9:30 a.m. Topic: Learn more about Leadership Dayton, the region's premier leadership program

■ **Virtual Safety Breakfast with the Experts**, Jan. 21, 8 to 9 a.m. Topic: A public health update. Speaker: Jeff Cooper, Dayton & Montgomery County health commissioner

## Chamber wants to honor region's innovators

Contributed story

The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce is once again searching for innovative businesses with a product or service that's disrupting industry. The Soin Award for Innovation, made possible by the generosity of successful Dayton entrepreneur Raj Soin and his family, is awarded each year to a business with a promising con-

cept that's ready for market.

"The Dayton area has a long history of innovation and discovery," said Rajesh Soin, chairman and CEO of Soin International. "We must continue to encourage our local entrepreneurs to build on this and create new enterprises, jobs and additional opportunities for this region. On behalf of the Soin family, I am proud to support this annual award

that recognizes the accomplishments of these individuals and businesses."

The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Soin family have partnered to offer the Soin Award for Innovation since 2007. Past winners include Arcani Coil Care, GlobalFlyte, Battle Sight Technologies, DESIN LLC's Obi, AAA Wastewater, Commuter Advertising and more.

Beyond the \$25,000 check, the winning company will receive publicity and recognition thanks to the chamber and supporting partners CareWorks and Cox Digital Marketing.

Applications are due by 4 p.m. on Feb. 26. Businesses interested in applying can find more information and the application at DaytonChamber.org.



Jerrica Hoskins, owner of 2020 Soin Award for Innovation winner Arcani Coil Care, gets a check from then-Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce CEO Phil Parker. CONTRIBUTED

### Commute

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pandemic. New York's transit agency proposed slashing subway and bus service by 40%, cutting commuter rail service in half and laying off nearly 9,400 positions. Washington D.C.'s transit system warned of layoffs and shorter hours as federal financial assistance dries up.

"It really is survival mode for the industry, or we're going to see dramatic reductions in their service deliveries, which would really be counter-productive," said Paul Skoutelas, APTA's President and CEO. "Essential workers rely on public transit by and large, and we can't let them down."

In September, 71% of U.S. workers across all sectors were commuting to physical workplaces while 29% were doing their jobs remotely, according to a survey of 1,015 employed adults by the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Those relying on public transit have already seen schedules cut since the start of the pandemic in March, leading to packed crowds on fewer buses and trains. Mounting tensions over lax social distancing and mask-wearing as coronavirus cases have only made their commuting experience worse.

Hipolito Andon, 44, rides the subway to Rockefeller Center in Manhattan where he works as a porter cleaning



People wear protective masks while boarding a bus near the Fordham Metro North station in New York. FRANK FRANKLIN II

and maintaining the building. He and his wife, who takes a bus to her school cooking job, are diabetic, increasing their risk of complications if they catch COVID-19. Andon's son takes public transit to a porter job as well. As soon as they get home, everyone showers and changes clothes.

As the pandemic has dragged on, Andon sees more people boarding trains without masks.

"You hear people muttering, 'Why is this guy not wearing a mask?' But there's no confrontation. People just move away," Andon said.

Alexandra Fee chose her apartment in Arlington, Virginia based on its proximity to the buses. But when the 28-year-old was confronted with returning to her job as a university academic adviser, she plunked down cash for a used car after noticing the

full buses that passed by her home, sometimes skipping her stop because they had reached capacity.

"If I plan on catching a bus at a certain time and they were too full that morning, would I then have to wait a half-hour for another bus?" Fee wondered.

Traffic patterns show a growing number of commuters making the same calculation.

Dozens of cities worldwide, including Paris and London, saw traffic rebound to pre-pandemic levels in September despite the fact that many major employers were keeping their workforces at home, according to Inrix, a company that analyzes traffic data. In the U.S., traffic in smaller cities from Colorado Springs to Knoxville, Tennessee surpassed pre-pandemic levels during

the morning commute. In the Seattle region, transit use was down 70% while the amount people drove was down just 20%, according to Inrix.

"What in many ways the pandemic did, in terms of automobile ownership and people's general use of various forms of mobility, is it reaffirmed the value of owning the means of transportation, especially in times of crisis," said Stephen Beck, founder and managing partner of cg42, a management consulting firm.

Parking lots are also filling up on weekday mornings in parts of New York, according to SP+, which operates more than 200 parking lots in the city. Revenue from lots near entertainment venues and hotels was down in early November but revenue from lots where cars arrive by 10

a.m. on weekdays was up 4% to 10% compared with pre-pandemic levels, said Jeff Eckerling, chief growth officer at SP+.

"Sitting here today, compared to where we were, this is great," he said.

For the millions of others riding subways, buses and trains daily, they must set aside their fears in order to get to work.

Sule Sokoni, a porter at a co-op building on Manhattan's Upper West Side, positions himself on his one-and-a-half-hour subway ride so he can see who's getting in and out, and will switch cars if someone boards coughing or without a mask instead of dozing off for the long ride. He's converting a bicycle into an electric bike so he can ride it to work instead.

Indeed, bike-sharing has become a more attractive

alternative to public transit during the pandemic. Lyft saw its shared bike rides increase by 12% in Chicago this fall compared to the same time last year, and by 7% in New York.

Uber is also trying to capture wary commuters, offering van services and shared rides to employees who work for the same company. The number of businesses using Uber's commuting products doubled from the start of the pandemic to September, said Ronnie Gurion, global head of Uber for Business.

"More and more companies are really looking for and thinking about how do I get more involved in the commute needs of my employees," Gurion said.

Most workers are on their own, however, taking calculated risks.

In New York's Bronx, two dozen passengers crowded together on a recent day to board a cross-town bus with nearly every seat full during the evening rush. Riders wore masks, but once inside, many sat just inches apart from each other.

Virginia Rodriguez hung back on the sidewalk, checking her smartphone to see when the next bus would arrive, hoping it would be less crowded as she headed home from her hospital job handling insurance.

"It's stressful in the sense that you don't know who's going to be next to you," Rodriguez said. "I try to keep my distance, and keep my mask on at all times. There's nothing else I can do. I just hope I don't get sick."