



# VOICE OF BUSINESS

## Dayton airport a critical asset to area's economy



**Chris Kershner**  
President and CEO  
Dayton Area Chamber  
of Commerce

The Dayton International Airport is key to business and economic growth in the Dayton region.

I know that are other airports in adjacent metropolitan areas that offer cheaper flights or non-stop service to your destination. This is a moot point when you factor in the travel time to one of these airports being one or more hours from your home. Additionally, depending

on the departure time, passengers may need to drive in the night before and rent a hotel room just to make that flight.

Let's also keep in mind the added logistics of arriving at the airport: parking a mile away, taking a shuttle, waiting 30 minutes to go through security and then taking a tram to the gate. Adding all of this extra time adds up quickly to add between two to four hours from leaving home to waiting at the departure gate. We all know that our time is more valuable than this.

Thankfully, logistics to Dayton International Airport is a different story. As a local regional airport, travel time from home is approximately 20 minutes, travelers park in a garage 100 feet from the main terminal (no shuttle needed), spend four minutes in TSA

### CHAMBER PROVIDES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE REGION

The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce has provided enhanced leadership and professional development programming for nearly 50 years with the legacy program of Leadership Dayton, then adding in Empower, the Executive Women's Council and the newly launched, Gen D Ignite cohort for early career professionals. This pipeline of professional development is a key pillar for the business community in talent attraction and retention. Both current and prospective employees are looking for how a company also will invest in their career growth and the chamber provides that answer with a tangible and visible asset. We are proud of all our professional development alumni, current participants and the businesses that continue to invest in their employees, and in turn, our region's success.

and walk to the gate in about five minutes. This total time from home to gate is a mere 30 minutes. Simply put, "That's Dayton."

As Dayton area businesses grow and expand, and corporate air travel returns to normal, productivity time and air service access to high priority business destinations is essential. This is core as

to why the Dayton International Airport is key to our economy and our business community.

Time equals money and the more time you don't spend traveling and waiting in lines, equals more time you spend being productive for your company, your family and yourself. To continue the long-term viability of this economic asset, the business com-

munity must continue to invest and support our region's only commercial airport.

This business support manifests itself as an aligned and organized business community. Working together with the chamber, the airlines and the airport to recruit, retain and utilize new and existing air service. Our region knows

that our secret to success over the years is our unification and willingness to do what is best for the collective business community. As we grow, the Dayton International Airport will become even more attractive to new air service, new direct flights and new destinations. Airlines look at current air service, passenger enplanements and destination demand.

These numbers determine if an airline strategically invests more in an airport and increase their air service destinations. As a business community, our support now will direct the future opportunities and viability of this critical economic development asset.

Chris Kershner is the president and CEO of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce.

## El Toro

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in Springfield to make their dream come true.

"With the profits from their first location, they invested a little bit extra and then they opened the second (in Bellbrook in 2001)," Alvarez said. "The second location was a bigger hit. The community in Bellbrook embraced them with open arms."

Alvarez said everything they made at the first two stores was reinvested in a third location in Mason in 2002, which was eventually moved to Beavercreek.

The restaurants continued to grow, leading to sites in Vandalia, Huber Heights, Dayton, Beavercreek, Springfield, Englewood, Springboro and Centerville.

Alvarez said their key to success is building relationships with their customers and reinvesting into the restaurants.

"They keep living within their means and reinvest everything they have into the next project," Alvarez said. "They felt like the city of Dayton and Springfield was a really good place for them to build that community."

The Munoz Family includes five brothers and one sister. Four of the brothers, Samuel, Adalberto, Juan and Sergio, are involved and present at the restaurants today.

El Toro has plans to continue to expand across the Dayton area.

Alvarez explained they are almost finished with renovations at their Bellbrook restaurant. They are also working on El Toro Express, a



El Toro has plans to continue expanding across the area. Also in the works is an El Toro Express, a fast-casual spot with a drive-thru coming to Miamisburg. NATALIE JONES / STAFF

fast-casual restaurant coming to North Springboro Pike in Miamisburg. El Toro Express is expected to open this summer and provide the same type of quality food their other restaurants offer, but more casual and an easier option to pick up and take with you. Guests will have the convenience of ordering through a drive-thru, but if they want to sit down inside, they can.

El Toro is planning to open a restaurant at 1388 E. Dayton Yellow Springs Road, east of Interstate 675 at the intersection with Trebein Road. Alvarez said architects are almost done with their part and then they can start building. The Fairborn spot is expected to open in roughly two years.

The restaurant also has plans to open a new concept in the former El Toro at 4448 Indian Ripple Road in Beavercreek. El Toro moved that restaurant across the street to the former space of Mimi's Bistro & Bakery at The Greene Town Center in January. The plan is to open Vallarta, a restaurant focusing on Mexican seafood, sometime this year. Alvarez said they are working on the menu.

The restaurant's name comes from the Mexican city of Puerto Vallarta, which Alvarez praises for its great cuisine.

"There's a lot of things we want to share with the community that they haven't seen," Alvarez said. "For example, the seafood.

We love that and we believe the American people will be open to it."

El Toro also has plans to add a patio to its location at The Greene.

As El Toro expands and adds restaurants, Alvarez said it's important to share their culture through food and ambiance.

"When you're trying to explain to people the beauty of the Mexican homes and their colors, traditions, artwork and stuff like that, it's kind of hard to explain it," Alvarez said. "You have to show it."

That's exactly what El Toro has done at at The Greene. One of the main areas has a layout similar to a hacienda. Alvarez previously explained a hacienda is a large house in



El Toro has relocated its Beavercreek restaurant at 4448 Indian Ripple Road to the former space of Mimi's Bistro & Bakery at The Greene. NATALIE JONES / STAFF

enda is a large house in Mexico that features a patio surrounded by balconies and a garden or fountain in the middle. El Toro has recreated two balconies on each side of the room with Mexican-styled decorations and a handmade tree in the middle. Part of the El Toro appeal is the inviting feeling you experience as soon as you enter. Alvarez explained Mexican culture has a strong sense of service reflecting the joy of giving and providing. In Mexico, when a guest visits someone's house, it's polite to offer them something. That's why guests receive chips and salsa as soon as they sit down.

El Toro offers traditional dishes and a mix of authentic flavors. Alvarez noted the menu has changed since they opened their first restaurant. For example, they have added street tacos and birria tacos.

"They've always been really popular in Mexico, but it just takes a little bit of time for people to be open to try new things," Alvarez said.

When asked what he is most proud of at El Toro, Alvarez credited the relationships built with their customers and the consistent service and care they provide.

"All of this started because of a dream of a father trying to start a business with his kids to be close to each other and share their food, recipes and traditions with the rest of the community," said Alvarez, who started working at El Toro as a dishwasher in 2003 at 18. "If that's not the definition of an American dream, what is? Find a way to stay close with your family and create something to be able to live."

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## Arise

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site, the center helps those in their recovery programs by providing the necessary life and work skills to establish new career paths and thrive in today's job market.

Greg, who has more than 25 years of experience as a chef, has reached eight years in long-term recovery.

Elaine Bonner, director of philanthropy at Emerge, explained that the

200,000-square-foot campus that sits on 45 acres houses several different entities including the nonprofit's offices, three for-profit businesses, GED classes and outpatient programming. The nonprofit has plans to hold a ribbon cutting on June 16 at 9 a.m. followed by a community open house from noon to 6 p.m. for its men's recovery housing section. Bonner said the men's housing is phase one with more housing in the works.

Bonner said over 100 peo-

ple work on the Emerge campus. The new restaurant provides breakfast and lunch options to those on campus as well as the public. The restaurant is not an official part of the nonprofit operation. The press release stated it is privately owned by Morris and Adams.

Arise Café will have daily and weekly specials in addition to the menu offerings Monday through Friday. Breakfast is served from 7 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and lunch is served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Folks will be able to order online through the TOAST app and pick up their orders," Shayne said. "We are also working on having delivery options."

The daily breakfast menu features a variety of breakfast sandwiches and wraps including a steak, egg and cheddar sandwich on a pretzel bun and a breakfast burrito filled with eggs, cheese, peppers, onions, sausage and home fries.

"Each of these are sure to satisfy your hunger," Shayne

said. "Our lunch menu features a variety of sandwiches, including the Cuban with beer braised pulled pork, ham, Swiss cheese and pickles with a spicy mustard sauce on our toasted Panini bread. We also have great salads, like our Arise Power Salad and house made soups. Our sides – like our hand cut fries and macaroni and cheese – are all homemade. We will have daily and weekly specials along with some sweet treats."

According to the release, the café plans to offer evening

and weekend hours. Catering is also available.

"This place is going to be a central hub for the folks working here, living here and coming here to help, whether it be mentors, sponsors, volunteers or people in recovery," Shayne said. "This is going to be a place to gather for a lot of activity that can show off what God can do. People coming through here will have all sorts of options."

For more information about the café, visit [www.thearisecafe.com](http://www.thearisecafe.com).

## AFRL

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small business office can be reached at [AFRL.sb.questions@us.af.mil](mailto:AFRL.sb.questions@us.af.mil) and [afrlsbhub.com/afrlsbo](http://afrlsbhub.com/afrlsbo).

In general, McJilton advised small businesses to acquaint themselves with the driving strategies for AFRL and the Air Force. Look at modernization imperatives and the lab's overall direction.

"Become better informed of what those strategies are, and more importantly, work through your APEXes," McJilton said.

"You know, the AFRL is unique," he added. "We have a number of collaboration outreach opportunities." There are plenty of local doors to knock on, such as the Ohio Federal Research Network and others.

Last fiscal year, the DOD spent \$85.2 billion on small business prime contracts,

and nearly 25% of the department's prime contracts go to small businesses.

Farooq Mitha, director of the DOD Office of Small Business Programs, testified in March before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the number of small businesses in the defense industrial base has declined over the last decade.

"This is an economic and national security risk for our nation," he said. "We risk losing mission-critical domes-

tic capabilities, innovation and strong supply chains. To respond to this, the department is working to strengthen our small business supply chains, increase competition and attract new entrants."

McJilton's biggest advice to small businesses: "It's getting connected. It really is. It's about really forming relationships."

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## BUSINESS OPENINGS

### Hardware store opens in Centerville

A grand opening celebration, which included refreshments, family-friendly activities, grilling demonstrations, raffles, giveaways and special offers was held April 29 at **Rocky's Ace Hardware**. Local dignitaries were

in attendance, including Centerville Mayor Brooks Compton.

Rocky's is at 251 East Alex Bell Road, Cross Pointe Centerville, Centerville.

In addition to its two Centerville stores, Rocky's Ace Hardware has newly rebranded locations in Dayton, Fairborn, Kettering, Miamisburg, New Carlisle, Springfield and Xenia.