

COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST



SPECIAL SECTION

A LOOK AHEAD

2026 promises to be a year of new challenges and opportunities. Check out our roundup of what to expect in the coming months.

BY BUSINESS FIRST STAFF, PAGES 15-27

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Economic development agency files multiple lawsuits to claw back grants and loans.

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COMING TO OHIO

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Mexican joint to replace Nada

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COVER STORY

Here's what leaders say is in
store for Central Ohio in 2026



GRAEME SLOAN/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

Backers of expanded passenger rail are hopeful the Columbus
region is getting closer to new Amtrak service.

When the newsroom at
Columbus Business
First began to plan the
first issue of 2026, we knew we
wanted to look ahead, not back.
As the saying goes: *The
windshield is a lot larger than
the rearview mirror.*
The idea for this issue is to
provide business intelligence
in a number of areas key to
Central Ohio's economic growth,
including transportation,
healthcare, office leasing,
commercial development,

restaurants and residential real
estate.
Our reporters chose the
topics they thought deserved a
deeper look going forward based
on their coverage in 2025.
Consider this first issue of
the year as a preview of sorts for
what to expect in each of these
business segments in the coming
year.
Some of the stories are more
broad than others, such as
reporter Carrie Ghose's look at
Central Ohio hospital systems

and the myriad construction
projects reshaping the healthcare
landscape.
Another story is focused on
Crawford Hoying, the Dublin
development firm behind Bridge
Park. Reporter (and now digital
editor) John Bush interviewed
Brent Crawford about his
company's far-reaching
development plans.
"You just have to have the
stomach and the willpower to
push through those (hard)
times and see that there will
be another side," the prolific
developer said.
Another story looks at
Amtrak's potential return to
Central Ohio, which reporter
Zach Jarrell reports would have
ripple effects statewide.
"(2026) will be a big, very
exciting year and a very historic
year for passenger rail in Central
Ohio," Parag Agrawal, chief
mobility and infrastructure
officer for the Mid-Ohio Regional
Planning Commission, told him.
You'll also find a full list of
our 2026 awards programs and
signature events in this issue.
The list includes deadlines for
nominations and how your
company can support these
programs through sponsorships
and advertising.
We're confident you will find
information in this issue that
will help your business in 2026.
- Mark Somerson

THEY SAID IT



"Having spent my
career leading
teams through
transformations,
I recognize the
magnitude of
the opportunity
before us, while
acknowledging
the hard work
that led us here."

Daren Griffin, newly
named CEO of the
Columbus Regional
Airport Authority.
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BY THE NUMBERS

\$2.88M
Amount JobsOhio
is seeking from 17
companies that received
funding but did not
create promised jobs
or report progress.
STORY, PAGE 4

1965
Year McDonald's built a
restaurant on North High
Street. It plans to tear it
down and build a new
restaurant on the site.
STORY, PAGE 8

400
Number of jobs Hims
& Hers says it will
add in New Albany.
STORY, PAGE 5

ON THE WEB



Ray Ray's seeks bankruptcy reorganization

After closing three locations in 2025, the two parent companies of Ray Ray's
Hog Pit have filed for bankruptcy protection. "We made a strategic decision
to use Chapter 11 to reorganize and come back even stronger," said James
Anderson, chef-owner.



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JobsOhio files new batch of clawback lawsuits



JobsOhio has been taking action against companies that have failed to deliver on job creation promises.

FILE PHOTO

Economic development organization suing 17 recipients for payback

BY CARRIE GHOSE
cghose@bizjournals.com

JobsOhio has sued 17 recipients of grants and other aid since October – almost as many lawsuits as the organization pursued in the prior three years combined.

The private economic development organization is seeking a combined \$2.88 million, according to complaints filed in Franklin County Common Pleas Court, against employers that had pledged to create 955 jobs by establishing or expanding an Ohio location.

Recipients defaulted on their agreements either by failing to report progress or not creating enough jobs, according to the complaints.

Nine companies that did file annual reports with JobsOhio had created a combined 174 jobs out of

594 they pledged.

JobsOhio does not comment on pending litigation, according to a spokesman, who reiterated a past statement that the organization takes seriously its stewardship of funds meant to support job creation.

JobsOhio pays for programs using profits from liquor sales in the state, working outside of but coordinating with the Ohio Department of Development.

Columbus Business First has compiled data on 53 such lawsuits since 2018.

Out of more than 4,200 projects, JobsOhio has sought to claw back funds from 4% of recipients for failing to create promised jobs, the spokesman said this summer.

In this fall’s batch, the largest single case seeks the return of \$1.25 million in revitalization and workforce grants to Union Metal Industries Corp. in Canton, which had pledged to create 250 jobs in 2019.

Union Metal created 137 jobs as of 2023, according to the JobsOhio complaint. By letter, JobsOhio asked for the return of \$250,000 – but after

not receiving payment sued for the entire amount.

It’s among four cases where the organization at first sought partial repayment.

New York City-based Candid Care Co., which makes orthodontic aligners, pledged 150 jobs at a downtown Columbus customer support center in 2019, and JobsOhio provided \$200,000 in in-kind recruitment and training assistance.

The agreement called for Candid to sustain that level through the end of 2023, but that year the company reported 57 jobs, the complaint said. JobsOhio at first sought repayment of \$18,000 before suing for the full amount.

Representatives of Candid Care were not immediately available, and it was not immediately clear if the office still exists.

Separately, JobsOhio is trying to collect \$713,000 in default judgments awarded this year against an Atlanta-area manufacturer, court records indicate.

RM Biltrite had pledged 44 jobs in 2020 as it opened a Columbus plant

for making various forms of industrial rubber sheeting. Complaints filed over the last two years said it “failed to meet metric commitments” without specifics.

Eight of the 17 recent cases involve the former JobsOhio Inclusion Grant, an up to \$50,000 program recently renamed the Small Business Grant.

Those complaints combined seek the return of just over \$300,000 out of \$26.6 million distributed under the program since 2020, according to Business First’s analysis.

JobsOhio seeks the repayment of a \$50,000 grant to Columbus-based PopCom, the smart vending company legally named Solutions Vending International Inc.

Under the May 2022 agreement, the company pledged to keep two jobs and add two in its Italian Village office.

Solutions Vending had no revenue in 2024, but did have four employees, according to an August filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. It had net assets of \$750 but debts of more than \$200,000.

PopCom did not provide a 2023 report to JobsOhio, according to the complaint. The organization demanded repayment of the grant in February via letter but did not receive payment.

Founder and CEO Dawn Dickson was not aware of the lawsuit, she said via direct message. Her LinkedIn profile says she is located in the Miami area, and she has posted publicly about doing business in Ghana.

The complaint was served at the company’s office on North 4th Street, the court record indicates. However, a jewelry designer took over that space three years ago, the owner confirmed.

PopCom paused operations after a 2022 investment round fell through amid the national VC downturn, Dickson told Business First, but she is working to restart the company and make good on all financial obligations.

“Like many startups, we faced challenges tied to Covid, the economy and the shift in the VC landscape, but despite all of that, I’ve kept PopCom alive and moving forward,” she said.

“My goal remains the same: scale the company and ultimately exit so all investors receive a return.”

Hims & Hers adding jobs with \$200M expansion

BY JOHN BUSH

jbush@bizjournals.com

A telehealth company is making a major expansion in New Albany.

San Francisco-based Hims & Hers Health Inc., a digital provider of health and wellness products and services, will invest more than \$200 million in a new facility at 9885 Innovation Campus Way.

The project more than doubles the company's local footprint and will create as many as 400 new jobs.

The 351,846-square-foot facility, built in 2022 and located about a half-mile from Hims & Hers' existing Central Ohio distribution center, will focus on fulfillment, lab testing, pharmacy operations and support "a broader range of offerings ... that reflect the evolving health and wellness needs of customers," according to a press release.

Buildout is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2026.

"We are proud to continue investing deeply in Ohio," Hims & Hers COO Mike Chi said in the release. "The community and our operations here are key to our commitment to delivering a simple, safe and personalized experience for every customer who trusts us with their health and wellness journey."

Hims & Hers has operated in New Albany since early 2020, when the company signed a lease for its current facility at 9750 Innovation Campus Way.

That project received a \$3.2 million state tax credit in exchange for the creation of 500 jobs with \$20.5 million in annual payroll. Hims will continue to lease the distribution center, and will receive additional assistance for the expansion from JobsOhio. The terms of that deal will be made public after a final agreement is executed.

"Ohio continues to be a leader in digital health," JobsOhio CEO J.P. Nauseef said in the release. "By implementing technology across the patient journey, innovative companies like Hims & Hers connect their customers with the personalized care they need at an affordable cost."

"This commitment from Hims & Hers demonstrates their belief in Ohio's state-wide strategy to grow next-generation industries like life sciences."

The 302,880-square-foot property at 9750 Innovation Campus Way recently sold for \$34.3 million in a portfolio transaction by Atlanta-based MDH Partners.

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Local projects land historic preservation funding

Program provides grants to 33 sites statewide in latest round of funding

BY LESLIE CAIMI
lcaimi@bizjournals.com

Four Central Ohio developments were among 33 projects statewide awarded Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

The Ohio Department of Development recently announced the recipients of the biannual awards.

“Through this program, we are breathing new life into iconic buildings so they can drive economic growth in Ohio, all while honoring the craftsmanship and character that make our state so special,” Gov. Mike DeWine said in a press release.

Only one Central Ohio project was awarded a tax credit in the previous round, the Marysville Water and Light Development, which saw its award increased in this round.

The four local projects will receive more than \$7.8 million in tax credits.

Former Knights of Columbus building: \$2.23M

New England-based Beacon Communities wants to convert the five-story building at 80 S. 6th St. into 70 affordable apartments.

The building dates back to 1926 as headquarters for the Knights of Columbus. In 1968, it was acquired by the Salesian Society, which turned it into a Boys and Girls Club.

The building has been vacant



LESLIE CAIMI | CBF

since 2017.

It has multiple ballrooms, a swimming pool and other communal spaces. Because of its layout, most of the units will be studios or one bedroom units.

The project received a \$1.8 million state brownfield remediation grant in 2024.

Second Presbyterian/Central Presbyterian: \$2.25M

The Columbus Association for the Performing Arts plans to turn the church at 132 S. 3rd St. into a perfor-

CAPA's planned music venue in a downtown church was one of four area projects awarded state tax credits.

mance venue and event space.

In partnership with architects Schooley Caldwell and Realm Collaborative, the main church building, stained glass windows and balconies original to the structure built in 1860 will be preserved.

Last January, the Downtown Commission approved plans to demolish a 1920s addition located at the back of the church so a new structure could be built in its place that provides greater accessibility.

Renderings show ground-floor renovations would include a kitchen

and bar/seating area surrounding the main performance hall. Plans for the second floor show a dressing room, lounge, kitchenette and rooftop bar.

Marysville Water and Light: \$3M

The Water and Light Development, a Connect Real Estate project on North Main Street in downtown Marysville, was included in the previous round of announcements in June. It was to receive \$2 million in tax credits but reapplied for increased funding, according to a press release.

The \$25 million project also received an \$8 million Transformational Mixed-Use Development tax credit as part of the program that helps finance projects that are expected to serve as a “catalyst” for future development, according to the state. It also received more than \$1 million through the brownfield remediation grant program to demolish the site’s former water treatment facilities and remediate environmental hazards.

Developer Brad DeHays plans to build a mixed-use campus, including coworking space, a spa, fitness facility and a 72-unit apartment building.

Clock & Boyd: \$350,000

Located in Mount Sterling at 31-33 and 35 S. London St., the \$2.1 million project includes two historic buildings and one non-historic structure.

The adaptive re-use project would convert the historic Clock & Boyd buildings’ commercial space to six apartments, in addition to retail space for a coffee shop or restaurant.

It marks the first Historic Preservation Tax Credit to be awarded to a project in Mount Sterling.



FRANKLIN COUNTY AUDITOR

A financial services company has opened an office at 5080 Tuttle Crossing Blvd. in Dublin.

REAL ESTATE

Texas firm picks Dublin for second headquarters

BY JOHN BUSH
jbush@bizjournals.com

A financial services firm has selected Dublin for its second headquarters.

Austin-based VIP Insurance Inc. and its sister company, Benefit Bank Distributors, recently opened at 5080 Tuttle Crossing Blvd. The businesses will occupy 11,000 square feet in the four-story, multi-tenant office building.

Though it is new to Ohio, three of its largest banking clients are based in the state, as are two major insurance carriers

it represents. In addition to proximity to its customers, VIP Insurance cited Dublin’s infrastructure, talent pool and relationship with city staff as reasons why it decided to locate there.

“We could have opened anywhere in Columbus,” Richard Chiu, executive vice president at VIP Insurance, said in a press release. “But the city of Dublin is very pro-business. The state is as well.”

VIP Insurance chose to open the new location in Central Ohio instead of expanding in Austin, according to the release.

The Dublin office houses a team tasked with deploying artificial intelligence tools to “reach to the tens of thousands of advisers they represent,” the release stated.

The company will employ approximately 15 financial services professionals and tech specialists within the first year of operations in Dublin.

“We can’t continue to do business the way we’re doing it today,” Chiu said in the release. “We’re investing heavily in AI. We’ll have a team of AI data scientists here in Dublin.”



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Rockford Homes names new president

Jim Lipnos will handle day-to-day operations, helping CEO Bob Yoakam

BY JOHN BUSH
jbush@bizjournals.com

Rockford Homes is making a leadership change as the company expands into additional markets.

The local homebuilder promoted Jim Lipnos to president after a more than two-year stint as land director.

Lipnos started at Rockford in October 2023 after leaving Treplus Communities, where he was senior vice president of development and construction.

Prior to that, he spent 15 years as president of Homewood Corp.

Bob Yoakam, who holds the title of president and CEO, will remain as the chief executive focusing on strategic decisions. Lipnos will be responsible for day-to-day operations.

“Jim brings extensive homebuilder and developer knowledge throughout his career,” Yoakam said.

Additionally, Lindsay Jones will be named vice president of sales and Jay Cobb will become vice president of construction.

The leadership changes took effect Jan. 1.

Yoakam said the promotions were made to accommodate growth of the company’s single and multifamily business.

That includes a new division in Dayton, where Rockford expanded last year. It has a pair of ongoing



COURTESY OF JIM LIPNOS

Jim Lipnos is the new president of Rockford Homes.

projects in the Dayton suburbs of Beavercreek and Huber Heights, and is planning a third in Xenia. Rockford also is expanding to Cincinnati next year, Yoakam said.

At the same time, the business is relocating its Polaris-area headquarters to a Westerville building it recently purchased for \$12.7 million.

Rockford Homes will move about 3 miles from 999 Polaris Pkwy., next to Polaris Fashion Place in Columbus, to 440 Polaris Pkwy. in Westerville, Yoakam confirmed.

Rockford plans to open the new

office in May 2026.

“We’re excited to become a member of the Westerville community,” Yoakam said.

Yoakam said Rockford has outgrown its current space, which the firm will look to sell or lease. Its new building, called Westar III, measures 144,000 square feet.

Rockford will lease 30,000 square feet and keep open the remaining suites for existing and prospective tenants.

A Colliers brochure lists roughly 26,800 square feet of available space.

The homebuilder plans to renovate the facility and add a fitness center, shared lounge, training room, new common spaces and a “social” space.

Yoakam said another reason for the move is the surrounding amenities. The Westar business district is home to several restaurants and retailers, as well as walking trails and city parks.

Among the latest additions to Westar is Smash Park, an “entertainment” concept that combines food, drinks and games, including its main attraction: pickleball.

“We feel the city has been deliberate in the kind of business park they wanted to create and we are excited to become a member of it,” Yoakam said.

Rockford is the fourth-largest homebuilder in Central Ohio, according to *Columbus Business First* research. Its gross sales in the region totaled nearly \$200 million last year, when it delivered 307 new homes and started on an additional 351.

Another local company that recently acquired a Westerville building for a new HQ is BTTS Holdings. The events, catering and floral business paid a little more than \$3 million for the site at 733 Green Crest Dr. on the southern edge of the city. The purchase included a more than 25,000-square-foot building that sits on 2.5 acres. BTTS, whose portfolio of seven venues includes Vue in the Brewery District and Darby House in Galloway, will occupy 10,000 square feet that previously housed a Tim Hortons franchisee.

REAL ESTATE

McDonald’s on High Street near campus to be torn down, rebuilt

BY DAN EATON
deaton@bizjournals.com

A decades-old McDonald’s is going to be demolished.

But the Golden Arches aren’t going away – a new McDonald’s will be built in its place.

The University Impact District Review Board recently approved McDonald’s plan to swap out an old building for a new one at 1972 N. High St. across from Ohio State University.

According to property records, the current 6,800-square-foot, two-story restaurant

was built in 1965 and remodeled in 2008.

The new 4,356-square-foot building would move from the middle of the site to fronting High Street with the existing parking lot remaining on the side of the building and additional parking in the rear, according to plans filed with the city. Commissioners praised that move.

The only point of contention raised at the meeting was about the lighting of the McDonald’s sign. The proposal requested exterior lights, but the commission prefers internal lighting. Swapping the exterior

lights for internal was the one condition placed on the approval.

The new McDonald’s restaurant would seat 48.

The property is owned by Franchise Realty Interstate Corp., an affiliate of McDonald’s that manages company real estate. It’s owned the property since 1979.

Columbus Business First reached out to McDonald’s about the desire to update that site, but has not heard back.

Being a pedestrian-heavy location across from Ohio State, the restaurant does not have a drive-thru.

The restaurant likely will have features friendly to the current digital-heavy age, similar to improvements other brands such as Dublin-based Wendy’s Co. and Columbus-based White Castle have made in their newest stores.

Those features include dedicated areas for digital and third-party delivery orders.

White Castle this fall unveiled its “Castle of Tomorrow” prototype restaurant at 1025 Alum Creek Dr. As is the case with the campus McDonald’s, that White Castle was constructed on the site of a demolished White Castle.

Columbus airport finds new leader in Reno, Nevada

Daren Griffin taking over huge transformation project with new terminal

BY ZACHARY JARRELL
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The Columbus Regional Airport Authority announced its next CEO as the new \$2 billion terminal project begins to take shape at John Glenn Columbus International Airport.

Daren Griffin, who currently leads the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority, will take over for retiring CEO Joe Nardone on Feb. 2, the authority said in a press release.

Nardone, who announced his retirement in June, steps down Jan. 2, capping off an eight-year tenure during which he was instrumental in bringing the terminal plans to fruition.

Griffin now will be tasked with



COLUMBUS REGIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
Daren Griffin has been named the Columbus Regional Airport Authority's new CEO.

seeing it cross the finish line. The project is expected to open in 2029.

"Having spent my career leading teams through transformations, I recognize the magnitude of the opportunity before us, while acknowledging the hard work that led us here," Griffin said in a statement.

"The CMH Next terminal project ... is a commitment to the future of Columbus."

Griffin has experience with huge projects.

He launched the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority's MoreRNO initiative – a \$1 billion capital improvement plan that included modernizing the terminal facilities and building a new ground transportation center.

The Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority operates the Reno-Tahoe International Airport and Reno-Stead Airport.

In addition to CMH, the Columbus Regional Airport Authority owns and operates Rickenbacker International Airport and Bolton Field.

Rickenbacker is working to make sure Anduril's plan for the largest single-site job creation project in Ohio's history goes forward. The company – in addition to a massive manufacturing campus – is planning a \$31 million hangar at Rickenbacker.

According to the Federal Aviation Administration, about 4.4 mil-

lion people boarded airplanes at John Glenn in 2024, compared to 2.4 million in Reno.

"I am eager to leverage my experience to ensure we deliver a first-class passenger experience with expanded nonstop service, drive economic growth and continue connecting Ohio with the world," Griffin said.

His experience isn't limited to Reno. At the Port of Portland, Oregon, where he served in various roles over a 16-year tenure, he led Portland International Airport's terminal expansion and modernization program, the local authority said.

"What stood out about (Griffin) was his deep and extensive knowledge of airport management and his track record of expanding air service and delivering major capital projects on-time and on-budget," Ramon Jones, the chair of the special committee that oversaw the search for the new CEO, said in the announcement.

In a statement, Columbus Partnership CEO Jason Hall called Griffin a "proven leader of globally connected airports who's delivered on complex projects." Noting major projects and the region's growth, Hall said Central Ohio "has a generational opportunity to expand nonstop air service" – in fact, "our ability to capture jobs in next-generation technology sectors depends on it."

\$2B

Project cost of the new terminal going up at John Glenn Columbus International Airport.

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Overseas firms pick Central Ohio for expansions

Net World Sports out of Wales, Germany's Englebert Strauss adding positions in region

BY DAN EATON
deaton@bizjournals.com

Two European retailers have announced plans to make Central Ohio their U.S. headquarters.

First, Net World Sports Ltd., hailing from Wrexham, Wales, plans to build its first U.S. headquarters, production and distribution facility in Madison County.

It's a project that could mean 55 new full-time equivalent positions in London.

Last month, the Ohio Tax Credit Authority approved a seven-year, 1.176% Job Creation Tax Credit for the company.

Net World Sports plans a \$30 million investment in Central Ohio – \$29 million for the building and an additional \$1 million in machinery and equipment.

The company would generate more than \$2.8 million in annual payroll from the proposed jobs.

The credit is valued at \$240,000 should

the business meet all of its employment goals.

Job listings on Indeed.com put the company at 1800 Route 42 NE in London.

Indiana, Tennessee and Nevada also competed for the project, according to the Ohio Department of Development.

Net World Sports founder Alex Loven's entrepreneurial origin story involves buying cricket bats directly from the manufacturer to sell to his fellow schoolmates – saving them money relative to buying through a retailer and turning a profit for himself. He launched the company in 2009.

Its roots are in sports equipment – soccer, baseball, cricket, tennis, golf, lacrosse, rugby and more. The business has since expanded into fitness, leisure and home and garden products.

"Our ethos is simple; to provide niche and mainstream products to the mass market as quickly and as efficiently as possible," the website states.

The company in 2022 moved into a new 411,000-square-foot warehouse in Wrexham, where it houses more than 15,000 products – 95% of which are Net World



Henning Strauss

Sports' own brands. The company employs 275, according to its website.

The company uses a third-party logistics company in Missouri for returns. It also lists a Camarillo, California, mailing address for payments.

Strauss to Columbus

A Germany-based workwear brand also announced it will call Central Ohio its U.S. home.

Englebert Strauss Co., also known as Strauss, will bring its U.S. headquarters to 285 Cozzins St. in the Arena District next year.

CEO Henning Strauss, in a press release, said the Columbus headquarters is a major step in the company's international growth.

"We were drawn to its position as a central business hub, the creative industry here and the kind of pioneering spirit that matches our culture," he said in the release. "This location gives us the ability to grow in the right way as Columbus grows, allowing us to be close to our customers."

The space will be a headquarters,

learning and development center and a showroom to showcase the company's work and utility gear, so in addition to being an office, it will also have a retail presence.

The Columbus operation will employ 30.

Columbus Business First has not yet spoken with Strauss about the scope of its plans here.

Founded in 1948, Strauss is a family-owned business and overseen today by the family's third generation – brothers Henning and Steffen Strauss.

It makes workwear such as multi-pocket cargo pants, work boots and gloves and cold-weather safety jackets with clients in a wide range of industries including agriculture, construction, logistics, trades and technical fields.

Though the business is a family name, Strauss also means ostrich in German so the company logo is an ostrich.

"Strauss is the kind of company that reflects where the Columbus metro is headed," Jason Hall, CEO of the Columbus Partnership, said in the release. "They're an innovative global brand that is excited about calling our city their American home."



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Investment manager Diamond Hill to be acquired by New York firm

Columbus company will remain in the Arena District after deal closes

BY GRACE MCCORMICK
gmccormick@bizjournals.com

Columbus investment management firm Diamond Hill is being acquired by New York City-based First Eagle Investments.

First Eagle offered \$175 per share in an all-cash transaction, valuing the company at approximately \$473 million, according to a press release.

Diamond Hill had approximately \$32.4 billion in assets under management as of Sept. 30 and First Eagle has about \$176 billion under management, according to the release.

The acquisition is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2026. Diamond Hill has until Jan. 14 to solicit other offers.



DIAMOND HILL

Diamond Hill will continue to operate its Columbus headquarters after its acquisition.

Diamond Hill was founded in 1990 and established as a public company in 2000.

The investment firm has claimed the lowest CEO to median employee pay ratio of all of Columbus' public companies for several years.

First Eagle is experienced in equity, fixed income, alternative credit

and multi-asset investment strategies, the release said.

Diamond Hill has focused on similar strategies, with a recent focus on fixed income and U.S.-focused multi-cap equity.

First Eagle CEO Mehdi Mahmud said he is confident the two companies will complement each other.

"Our clients expect First Eagle to be a thoughtful curator of superb and differentiated investment strategies," Mahmud said in the release. "The acquisition of Diamond Hill is the next step in First Eagle's ongoing effort to expand the range of investment solutions we offer to meet clients' needs."

"The cultural fit between our firms ... couldn't be better," he said.

The \$473 million purchase price represents a 49% premium over Diamond Hill's closing share price of \$117.48 on Dec. 10, and a 44% premium over the 30-day average price, the release said.

Diamond Hill will continue to operate its Columbus headquarters "with no changes to its investment philosophy or process," the release said.

Diamond Hill operates out of the 325 John H. McConnell Blvd. building in the Arena District.

"This partnership is a testament to the strength and resilience of our business and delivers immediate value to our shareholders," Diamond Hill CEO Heather Brilliant said in the release.

"Joining First Eagle, whose 160-year history reflects a deep commitment to client outcomes, will position Diamond Hill for continued success over the long term," she said.

\$32B

Assets under management by Diamond Hill. It is being acquired by a firm with \$176 billion under management.



**EXECUTIVES
OF
THE
YEAR**

COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

INTRODUCING EXECUTIVES OF THE YEAR

We're excited to announce a fresh chapter for our annual program recognizing the region's top executives! Formerly known as the **C-Suite Awards**, the program has been reimagined as **Executives of the Year** to better reflect the many layers of leadership driving success across organizations. This isn't just a new name— it's a broader vision. By expanding the focus, we aim to celebrate outstanding executives who demonstrate innovation, impact and excellence — whether they lead finance, operations, technology, marketing or other critical functions.

Why nominate?

Your nomination helps shine a spotlight on leaders who are shaping the future of business in our region. If you know an executive who exemplifies strategic thinking, inspires their teams, and delivers measurable results, we want to hear about them.



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ZIP code Primary municipality (County)		% of adult population (25 and older) with bachelor's degree or higher, 2023 ¹	Per-capita income ¹	Population ¹	Poverty rate ¹	Median age ¹
1	43212 Columbus/Grandview Heights (Franklin County)	78.2%	\$69,506	23,092	11.6%	31.5
2	43215 Columbus/Downtown (Franklin County)	71.5%	\$75,351	16,999	14%	30.5
3	43221 Columbus/Upper Arlington (Franklin County)	69.3%	\$65,602	35,037	5.4%	37.9
4	43017 Dublin (Franklin County)	69.1%	\$68,477	41,422	6.4%	38.9
5	43016 Dublin (Franklin County)	68.9%	\$62,779	44,514	5.7%	38.2
6	43082 Westerville (Delaware County)	68.3%	\$64,422	33,799	3.3%	43.1
7	43065 Powell (Delaware County)	68.2%	\$72,415	45,284	2.6%	42.7
8	43035 Lewis Center (Delaware County)	67%	\$56,053	35,732	3.2%	35.3
9	43214 Columbus/Clintonville (Franklin County)	65%	\$60,667	26,420	9%	41.6
10	43201 Columbus/Weinland Park (Franklin County)	64.8%	\$33,252	33,873	42.6%	23.1
11	43054 New Albany (Franklin County)	64.5%	\$85,214	27,727	2.1%	37.8
12	43220 Columbus/Upper Arlington (Franklin County)	63.4%	\$60,401	29,715	10.9%	36.7
13	43202 Columbus (Franklin County)	62.2%	\$41,306	20,059	22%	30
14	43085 Columbus/Worthington (Franklin County)	61.8%	\$59,188	26,154	6.3%	39.4
15	43021 Galena (Delaware County)	59.9%	\$69,295	14,855	4.3%	41.2
16	43235 Columbus (Franklin County)	59.2%	\$52,211	45,171	10.2%	36.9
17	43209 Columbus/Bexley (Franklin County)	56.8%	\$59,639	28,431	9%	38.7
18	43026 Hilliard (Franklin County)	55.3%	\$50,908	64,644	7.1%	35
19	43064 Plain City (Madison County)	55.2%	\$56,541	17,829	2.6%	36.9
20	43023 Granville (Licking County)	54.6%	\$61,531	15,772	3.7%	37.8
21	43081 Westerville (Franklin County)	54.3%	\$47,239	64,314	6.8%	36.1
22	43230 Columbus/Gahanna (Franklin County)	50.2%	\$47,980	59,522	6.5%	36.7
23	43147 Pickerington (Fairfield County)	49.8%	\$48,811	45,929	3.4%	38
24	43206 Columbus/German Village (Franklin County)	47.7%	\$53,972	22,026	14.2%	34.6
25	43015 Delaware (Delaware County)	46.7%	\$47,986	59,027	8.3%	38.6

¹ Data for education level, per capita income, population, poverty rate and median age are the most current available from the Census Bureau.

ABOUT THE LIST: Information on The List was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN COLUMBUS

FEATURED

ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERING | PROMOTION

Katie Freeland

MSA Design

Principal/VP of Operations

Katie Freeland, AIA, LEED AP, has been promoted to Vice President of Operations for the Columbus Studio at MSA Design, where she also serves as a Principal of the firm. Freeland leads operational strategy focused on strengthening efficiency, collaboration, and firm-wide excellence. She is known for guiding teams with empathy, authenticity, and adaptability, cultivating an environment where people feel supported, connected, and empowered to excel.



ACCOUNTING

New Hire



Melody Van Dusen

Schneider Downs & Co. Inc.

Tax Shareholder

Schneider Downs, one of the 60 largest certified public accounting and business advisory firms in the United States, announces that Melody Van Dusen has joined the firm as a tax shareholder.

Ms. Van Dusen joins Schneider Downs from a national firm, where she held a leadership role in a client serving capacity. Included among her areas of focus are Accounting Standards Codification 740 and assisting Emerging Companies in all stages of development.

ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERING

Promotion



Maria Carpenter

MSA Design

Associate/Senior Interior Designer

Maria Carpenter, AIA, IIDA, NCIDQ, CREW, has advanced within MSA Design as an Associate. Carpenter, a 2012 University of Cincinnati graduate, is licensed in Ohio and Wisconsin and brings a multidisciplinary perspective to architectural and interior design practice. She serves as Co-Chair for Columbus IIDA Advocacy, where she champions Interior Design licensure and mentors emerging designers preparing for NCIDQ certification.

FEATURED

BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES | PROMOTION

Ken Wiseman

Civista Bank

Senior Vice President/Regional Market Executive

Civista Bank announces the promotion of Ken Wiseman to SVP, Regional Market Executive for Central Ohio, serving the Greater Columbus and Dayton regions. With 28+ years of commercial banking experience, he is based in Dublin and actively serves his community. Contact Ken to discover how Civista can be the right partner for your financial goals.



LAW

New Hire



Spencer Hattermer

Cooper Elliott

Attorney

Attorney Spencer Hattermer joined Cooper Elliott after federal clerkships with judges of the Southern District of Ohio and the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Before the clerkships, he represented incarcerated clients in civil rights cases. He's a UCLA School of Law graduate and worked with the national prescription opiate litigation plaintiffs' executive committee representing communities seeking accountability from drug companies. He also spent ten years as a union and community organizer.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

New Hire



Josh Anderson

Echelon Risk + Cyber

Virtual Chief Security Officer

Echelon Risk + Cyber welcomes Josh Anderson as the newest leader in our vCISO practice. With nearly 25 years in IT, security, and executive roles, including CIO and Director of Information Security, Josh brings deep client-side experience, a commitment to privacy as a basic human right, and a passion for strengthening organizations through clear, business-aligned security leadership.



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- **Community Connection:** Engage with passionate staff and volunteers dedicated to fighting hunger and witness the strong community bonds fostered through their work.

Mid-Ohio Food Collective is the largest hunger relief organization in central and eastern Ohio. Through our five assets (Mid-Ohio Foodbank, Mid-Ohio Farm, Mid-Ohio Pharmacy, Mid-Ohio Kitchen, and Mid-Ohio Market), MOFC addresses the root causes of hunger while working with more than 600 partner agencies in 20 counties to feed hundreds of thousands of hungry Ohioans every year. Learn how we're co-creating hunger-free, healthier communities at www.mofc.org. MOFC's headquarters in Grove City also offers professional meeting space for community groups and corporate functions. Our accessible indoor community room can accommodate up to 275 guests and features freshly upgraded A/V functionality. For more information, contact Gloria McCoy at gmccoy@mofc.org.

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PRESENTED BY:



HOSTED BY:



Questions? Contact Melissa Price at mprice@bizjournals.com

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A LOOK AHEAD | CENTRAL OHIO

EXPECT MORE RAPID CHANGE IN COMING YEAR

When are things going to get back to normal?

It's been a head-spinning first half of the decade for the Central Ohio business community, not to mention the U.S. overall, and all indications seem to point to more monumental changes in the coming years.

First, though, we wanted to take a moment to look at the immediate horizon and ask industry leaders about what to expect in 2026 in the region. You'll find several of those stories in this week's paper, with a few more available online at columbusbusinessfirst.com.

In an era marked by rapid change, uncertainty has become the constant. Another constant is our pledge to you, our readers – we'll do our best to keep you up to date on the transactions and trends affecting the Central Ohio economy – and your business.

This is going to be an exciting year and I look forward to experiencing it along with you.



**BY DOUG
BUCHANAN**
Editor in Chief

FLIGHT TO QUALITY DRIVING INVESTMENT

Some office buildings now qualify for ‘Class A+’ designation as owners commit to upgrades to attract more tenants.

In February, JPMorganChase & Co. CEO Jamie Dimon came to town and declared the demise of the remote work model. ¶ “It hurts creativity, it slows things down, it slows down decision-making, it slows down meeting people,” he said at *Business First’s* 2025 Power Breakfast. ¶ You could almost hear a collective sigh of relief among commercial brokers and office landlords. ¶ Return-to-office mandates gained momentum this year, with the bulk of JPMorganChase’s employees called back by March and others, including the state of Ohio, following suit.

The latest NAIOP office report for the third quarter of 2025 detailed a nationwide trend of office demand growing by 19.8 million square feet compared with negative net absorption of 14.9 million square feet in Q2. But the transition hasn’t yet meant a return to the previous status quo. The office market was bludgeoned by the Covid pandemic shutdown, with employees growing accustomed to the ease of the work-at-home arrangement - no commute, no professional attire and dining room workstations. Since then, returning workers have shown new expectations for the workplace, including an elevated commercial office experience. Columbus, say hello to Class A+ office space.

Flight to quality
Real estate professionals nearly universally agree that tenants want



BY LESLIE CAIMI
lcaimi@bizjournals.com

amped up office space, calling it a “flight to quality.” The live-work-play model is the ideal, with walkability to dining and entertainment options a must. And tenants want parking that is covered, safe and close by. Inside, office kitchens are beginning to resemble hotel bars instead of a linoleum-laced afterthought. Andy Dutcher, a managing director at JLL, said tenants are putting more value on trophy space in a nice building and they are willing to pay for it. In the third quarter of 2025, Class A net absorption in the Columbus downtown market totaled 13,892 square feet, research from Colliers shows, whereas Class B space had a negative net absorption of 84,522 square feet. Organizations with deep pockets are bending over backwards to entice their teams back and are also trying



Developer Jeff Edwards in the sunken garden at the Preston Centre.



FILE PHOTO BY JEFFRY KONCZAL | FOR CBF

to lure the next generation of talent who may have yet to experience a physical office space since they were in college during the pandemic.

“Companies want to make it comfortable and exciting for employees and they even see their space as a recruiting tool,” said Michelle Fude, senior vice president and co-founder of Allied Real Estate.

Joey Lamb, VP of brokerage at JLL, said tenants now are more sophisticated in their searches, operating in tandem with workplace strategy teams to design bespoke spaces.

Though they require costly build-outs to achieve those dreams, they tend to yield a longer lease for the landlord.

“Some companies may have downsized headcount, but are upsizing in terms of space when it comes to a necessity for a variety of options,” he said. “They’re looking for specific collaborative zones, client-facing zones, back-of-house zones. They are meticulous about what they want.”

As Class A options are filling up at places such as Bridge Park in Dublin, Polaris in north Columbus and Worth Street at Easton, the Class B market will have to start improving and filling in, Dutcher said.

“Landlords in Class B buildings will start investing in their buildings and will see occupancy rates rise,” he said of 2026.

So with tenants in Class C spaces now looking to move to Class B and Class B tenants seeking a bump to Class A, where do those existing Class A tenants have to go?

A new class of office space

Fude and her team at Allied found the usual descriptions of Class A, Class B and Class C weren’t necessarily guiding her clients to the right spots.

“Classifications can feel very subjective. You see these labels on a listing, but you talk to brokers who are taking clients out to see the space and they are telling me, ‘There is no way that building is Class A,’” she said.

Thus, Allied set out to more clearly

define the designation for premier commercial spaces. Officials there are calling this slice of the office market Class A+.

Hannah Williams, a market research analyst at Allied, helped create the parameters for the category to make it more objective. To qualify for a Class A+ designation in Columbus, a building needs:

- To have been built or had a significant renovation after 2014.
- A base rent higher than \$18 per square foot.
- On-site amenities such as a fitness center, cafe or tenant lounge.

Allied found 45 properties in the Columbus market that qualify for the Class A+ designation, leaving 144 properties in the Class A category.

The Class A+ properties include the redeveloped Preston Centre at 155 E. Broad St., the under-construction Merchant Building by the North Market, the first office building at The Peninsula, 711 N. High St. in the Short North, and 80 E. Rich St. and 250 S. High St. bordering Columbus Commons.

The Preston Centre was considered Class A office space when it was the PNC Tower, but then developer Jeff Edwards completed an extensive adaptive reuse project to turn it into a mixed-use property, giving it the amenities and polish to qualify for Class A+.

The tower is but one of the developments in Edwards’ Capitol Square Renaissance Project that also includes the new Pembroke apartment tower, an elevated walkway known as Preston Park and the upcoming 4th Street Tower, which will be a mixed-use building behind Preston Centre.

Next to the Arena District, brokers are also eyeing leasing activity on the yet-to-open Merchant Building, developed by Edwards Cos. and Rockbridge.

The 32-story building will include 64,828 square feet of office space across two floors, with apartments, a private club, hotel rooms and other amenities set to fill other floors.



LESLIE CAIMI | CBF



NBBJ

Construction continues on the Merchant Building next to the North Market, seen in the top photo. Above, a rendering of the finished project.

Leasing is being overseen by Matt Gregory and Philip Bird of NAI Equities and rates are expected to be among the highest in the city, around \$35 per square foot.

The Allied team said that if the Merchant Building can land the high rates the developers are seeking, it could change the game for premier office spaces in Columbus. They expect out-of-town developers might be more likely to invest in constructing Class A+ commercial space here if they can see demand for that kind of space.

HIGH COSTS STAYING ON THE MENU

The restaurant business in 2026 might look a lot like 2025 – and that could be a problem for owners and operators.

The high costs that hamstrung restaurant owners in 2024 and 2025 likely will continue this year, experts say. ¶ “There’s talk of a K-shaped economy. We’re definitely seeing that,” said John Barker, CEO of the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance, referring to uneven growth leaving many Americans behind. “We’re seeing some restaurants grow sales, but others are struggling.” ¶ “The customer is more cognizant of costs,” said Mark Kelnhofer. “They’re either going out less or they’re buying less when they do.”

Kelnhofer advises restaurants on menu construction and cost management as CEO of Return on Ingredients. “Traffic is down this year. Pretty consistently. We’re seeing a holiday bump now. That’s good,” Kelnhofer said. “But the worry is that when we hit January, first quarter traffic could be down even more than the previous January.”

The decline in customer spending contributed to several culinary casualties around Columbus last year, including the departure of heralded high-end destinations such as Chapman’s Eat Market and the demise of the once-hot fast-casual chain Hot Chicken Takeover.

Even Dublin-based fast-food chain Wendy’s has seen sales decline and expects to close approximately 300 U.S. restaurants in 2026 – roughly double the closings that occur in a typical year.



BY DAN EATON
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Growing top line
The National Restaurant Association’s monthly Restaurant Performance Index, which surveys restaurants on a variety of measures including sales, traffic, labor and expenses, has now been negative for four consecutive months.

Survey participants have reported fewer customers for nine straight months. Although sales expectations were mixed, nearly half said they expect economic conditions to deteriorate.

“Successful restaurants are navigating the climate where there’s a very discerning customer,” Barker said. “Middle class and lower are struggling. They’re still going out but they’re more choosy. They’re looking for deals.”

Creating value isn’t simply a matter of price. It’s what the customer gets for that price.

Schmidt’s Sausage Haus last year



Workers prepare meals at Schmidt’s Sausage Haus in German Village.

brought back its Autobahn buffet for the first time in five years. It carries a \$25 price tag, but customers can eat as much as they want.

“We saw a dip in guest counts,” said CEO Kyle Schmidt. “It made sense to us to bring that back.”

Traffic rose immediately and has stayed consistent, he said.

Avery Ward, the third-generation owner of Little Italy Ristorante in

Groveport, said he knew he needed to reach more potential customers. To do that, he has maximized social media with posts and videos – he’s the one wearing pizza slice shirts – to create a following.

Total sales were up 14.5% last year with growth at the restaurant, but also increases in catering and the food truck business, he said.

The ability to diversify helps



FILE PHOTO BY JEFFRY KONCZAL | FOR CBF

Schmidt's, too. It has its German Village restaurant, catering, food trucks and e-commerce. The food truck business, for example, was down in 2025, Schmidt said. But restaurant traffic and catering are up, thanks in part to winning a deal to service the Ohio Expo Center.

Managing bottom line

The need to grow sales is paramount

when costs continue to rise.

Average food and labor costs are up 35% over the past five years, while other costs such as rent, utilities and credit card processing fees are up, too, according to the National Restaurant Association.

Kelnhofer said labor costs are leveling off, but food prices remain a challenge. Average menu prices have increased by 31% during the same

time period.

"We absolutely hate raising prices," Schmidt said. "I'm a consumer myself with a family of six. I know how expensive it can be to go out. We try everything else first."

That includes renegotiating deals with suppliers and undertaking an item-by-item menu analysis.

Ward said new Entrepreneurial Operating System software prepped Little Italy to be more nimble.

"To a dime, I know what our costs are," he said.

For example, when the cost of pepperoni increased, the business responded quickly. A 10-cent price increase offset some cost. From there, sales increases can make up the rest, he said.

Barker said food costs rose by 3.5% in 2025 collectively.

But that increase likely felt different to a steakhouse than it did to a chicken finger joint. Beef prices rose by 14.7% year over year, while chicken rose by just 1.5%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"It's beef now. In the spring, it was eggs," Schmidt said. "Food is what it is, but maybe there will be relief in other areas. Utilities hopefully."

Though tariffs remain a concern, the issue with beef is more of a supply chain issue – there are fewer cows and fewer processing plants in the U.S.

Kelnhofer said that issue isn't going to ease any time soon. "It takes a while to grow a cow," he noted.

The restaurant business is famously volatile, with some 20% to 30% of restaurants closing within the first year and roughly 50% closing within five.

"There's no common thread," said Randy Sokol of Sokol & Associates, whose family owns Tee Jaye's Country Place. "I know restaurants with sales records and some setting records in the negative."

Sokol, whose business is helping others buy and sell their restaurants, said after a slow summer, there is a high number of listings now.



DAN EATON | CBF



TOM DUBANOWICH

Little Italy Ristorante in Groveport, top, and John Barker of the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance.

He also said he's seeing more openings than closings, though a lot of that is among restaurant chains, including Culver's, Chick-fil-A and Sweetgreen.

Overall, Sokol said he isn't seeing anything out of the ordinary.

"People want to sell their businesses for the same reasons they always want to," he said. "You have older operators who want to get out. There are divorces, partner problems. I'm not seeing people exit because the climate is bad."

However, Sokol said he does see increased rents impacting decisions. When the opportunity to resign leases comes, some operators – even ones with solid businesses – are balking at the asking prices.

"I think landlord expectations are high," he said. "That's difficult for operators."

STRATEGY FOR 2026: TURNING INTO THE STORM

Crawford Hoying's Brent Crawford on how the busy firm is navigating the continued challenges of the real estate market.

Crawford Hoying is among the most successful developers in Central Ohio, but even it has not been immune to the downturn in the real estate market. Construction costs and interest rates remain elevated, making it hard for companies to find the capital they need to execute projects on time and on budget. That's made it harder for the Dublin-based firm to execute new deals and deliver on the ones it started. Crawford Hoying Principal Brent Crawford recently sat down with *Columbus Business First* to discuss the current state of the market, why the downturn has lasted as long as it has and how his company is maintaining a strong pipeline despite headwinds.

What's the current state of your business and the real estate market overall? We're heading into our fourth challenging year of this current real estate cycle. We still have relatively high interest rates and construction costs and it's a challenging debt market.

Those are the most important components in our world besides demand, which is still there somewhat, though it's not overwhelming. We're not seeing rents move up at a level that's sufficient to outpace those other factors.

With that being said, we've still had the pedal down. I always say that the best way to get through a storm is to turn into it and face it head on because you'll get through it faster. We still have to run our



BY JOHN BUSH
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business and execute on what we've promised. We've had to pull every lever possible to get things to happen now.

Pre-Covid, you could throw a dart at the board and the deal is probably going to work. But now, you're hunting for every last lever to pull in order to make things work.

It's the longest down market I've seen in my 32-year career.

How does this cycle compare to previous ones? People are comparing it to '08-'09. This isn't as bad in a way, but there are parts that are worse. Back then, banks were falling apart and because of that, they were cutting rates rapidly. So we had extremely low interest rates. You could weather the storm with short-term loans and wait it

out until the debt market was ready to do things longer term.

We don't have that now because short-term rates in a lot of cases are higher than the long-term rates. If we can get the short-term rates to come down, it'll at least help on some of our construction loans.

Why do you think it's lasted this

Brent Crawford is founder and principal of Dublin-based developer Crawford Hoying.





CORY KLEIN PHOTOGRAPHY

long? One of the reasons is because of where the rates are now. That is very closely tied to our federal debt, which is far too high. We're at \$37 trillion-plus in debt and it's growing rapidly.

There is a supply-and-demand dynamic happening. When your government needs to borrow way more than the public, it's going to

keep rates up. We need to cut our spending way back if we really want to see it come down.

Do you see an end in sight? There are some (government) spending things I still don't like, but there are some revenue things that we have happening now that are helping. But by no means is the current

situation sustainable.

How can developers navigate the current market? You just have to be in a good capital position in order to handle it as loans are coming due and new valuations are set. If you build something for \$40 million and it's worth \$35 million now, that means there's going to have to be pay-downs on those loans. So you've got to keep your eye on what's coming down the road to know what expirations you have in six months, a year, 18 months, etc.

How has your company fared despite these headwinds? We still have a lot in the pipeline. In fact, it's our largest pipeline of all time. But we still have to be able to move on all those things. So we're just factoring everything into our deals – construction costs, interest rates, debt markets, availability of capital.

It's still a challenge, but we've got some incredible properties that we want to move forward on. So we've really been focused on getting those moving. There are some I wished we could have started 18 or 24 months ago, but haven't because of all those factors.

You have to have the stomach and the willpower to push through those times and see that there will be another side and not get caught up in the minutiae of the moment. It's really tough, but some of the best things I've done in my career were when things were the most challenging.

What are some big projects you have in the pipeline? We have three new blocks of Bridge Park in development right now. J Block is under construction and is moving along well. The leasing and sales activity has been really strong so far especially on the condos. And the offices are doing great as well.

Next year, we're hopeful we can break ground on Y Block, which includes the hotel we're doing with



CRAWFORD HOYING



CRAWFORD HOYING

Renderings show two new additions to Crawford Hoying's Bridge Park development in Dublin.

Cameron Mitchell. And then H Block, we'll probably start on that in the spring or early summer.

We've got our OSU hotel and a few other hotel projects in the works. That's been a big part of the diversification of our business. I think we're up to 14 hotels. Historically, Columbus hasn't had a great hotel stock. We need more great hotels. ... Our city deserves it, so that's what we want to deliver.

Beyond Central Ohio, we have a large project in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It's a mixed-use development, very similar to Bridge Park. We also have a large advanced manufacturing project in Virginia that we're helping get done. The diversification we've developed over the years is a hallmark of our company and will continue to be as we move forward.

LOCAL HOSPITALS RISING UP TO MEET DEMAND

Central Ohio health systems are adding nearly 1,000 beds across the region as the healthcare sector booms.

From 2019 to 2024, Ohio lost more than 2,000 hospital beds statewide, according to American Hospital Association data. But over the coming decade, Columbus health systems are adding nearly 1,000 net new beds – possibly more – by building towers. Meanwhile, OhioHealth Corp. is seeking regulatory approval to acquire Fairfield Medical Center in Lancaster – its fifth merger since 2019. That would mean the Central Ohio market share leader, which has the most beds and admissions in Franklin County, would own community hospitals in three of the six surrounding counties.

In 2026, Central Ohio will see a frenzy of new hospital activity – whether first gaining board approval, erecting steel beams, training staff and installing MRIs, or registering the first patient. Altogether, six Central Ohio inpatient projects that are opening, under construction or planned span 3.8 million square feet – 88 acres – and encompass 1,717 private rooms. “A project of this scale, as a health-care executive, doesn’t come along in someone’s career very often,” said Kristina Stuecher, vice president of the \$600 million OhioHealth Women’s Center, expected to open in spring 2027. “It’s been really cool to see how a building like this comes to fruition.” In Columbus, such career highlights are starting to accumulate – two other inpatient towers are even bigger than the Women’s Center.



BY CARRIE GHOSE
cghose@bizjournals.com

The \$1.9 billion, 1.9-million-square-foot University Hospital at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center opens on Feb. 22. The largest single construction project in school history will support 12,000 jobs – 2,000 of them new – and replace rooms in facilities dating back to 1951. “While I’m excited to cut the ribbon, I’m far more excited about the transformational work that will take place inside this incredible new space,” OSU President Ted Carter said in December. Across Route 315 and three exits north on the campus of OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital, construction on the 565,000-square-foot Women’s Center was 50% complete as of mid-December. It’s the next major project set to open in Central Ohio. The inpatient tower has been



WENDY PRAMIKI

TOWERING GROWTH

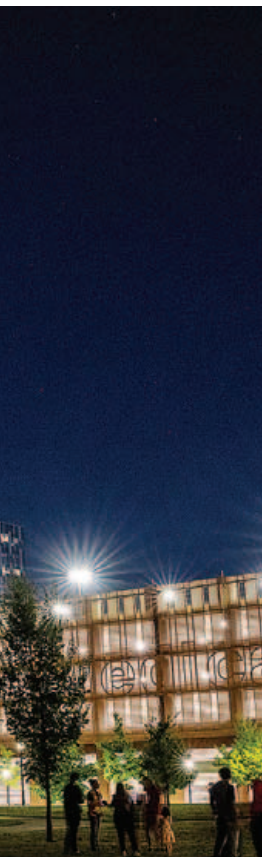
Columbus health systems are preparing for a growing and aging population by adding hundreds of beds while increasing outpatient capacity. In some cases, older facilities will convert double to single rooms or take old rooms out of service, affecting the total of net new beds. A look at hospital towers planned or under construction, in chronological order:

Project	Beds in structure
OSU Wexner Medical Center new University Hospital	820
OhioHealth Women’s Center (at Riverside Methodist Hospital)	185
OhioHealth Grant Medical Center critical care tower	160
Nationwide Children’s Hospital critical care tower	432
OhioHealth Dublin Methodist Hospital addition	96
OhioHealth Pickerington Methodist Hospital addition*	24
Total	1,717

* Pending board review and approval; Note: Most new towers will open in phases over the coming decade. Net new totals

enclosed in glass and drywall has been installed in the basement, Stuecher said, while exterior glass sheathing is going up on the medical office building. Throughout the year, teams will equip the space floor by floor, recruit and train staff and plan the move and

new workflows, she said. The center unites currently scattered services – childbirth, mammography and gynecologic surgery, for example – and adds new services and dedicated public health and nutrition education space. In 2025, more than 6,500 babies



OSU WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER



JEFFRY KONCZAL | FOR CBF



SUSAN POST | CBF

Clockwise, from left, a look at new facilities from three local hospital systems: The new tower at OSU Wexner Medical Center, the upcoming OhioHealth Women's Center at Riverside Methodist Hospital, and a second main tower going up beside the first at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

	Net new beds on campus	Square footage	Opening
	380	1,900,000	February 2026
		565,000	Spring 2027
	44	270,000	Mid-2028
	311	850,000	2028
	96	207,000	2028
	24	27,000	TBD
		3,819,000	

for OhioHealth and Children's are subject to change because "backfill" plans for existing facilities are developing.

SOURCE: COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST RESEARCH

were delivered at Riverside, the state's busiest birthing center. The Women's Center will be able to accommodate 7,000 to 8,000 deliveries, Stuecher said.

Three other hospital additions target a 2028 opening, including the \$1.3 billion, 850,000-square-foot critical

care tower at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

"Anybody driving by on I-70 will see Columbus is committed to the health of its children," said Patty McClimon, the pediatric health system's senior vice president of strategic and facilities planning.

OhioHealth also is building a critical care tower at Grant Medical Center downtown and plans an addition at Dublin Methodist Hospital. Its board votes in January on whether to expand Pickerington Methodist Hospital.

The new towers across Central Ohio will open in phases. Children's will start with 240 of 432 beds in its 14-story tower, equipping and staffing the rest through 2035.

OSU opens with 670 of its 820 beds and will bring the rest online as demand indicates.

After decommissioning beds in old facilities, some space converts to office or other use, while some rooms will be renovated and reopened.

Five of the projects result in 855 net new beds when all is complete, but the total could top 1,000. OhioHealth planners have not yet determined how many beds would be subtracted in the main Riverside hospital after adding the 185 Women's Center rooms.

Separately, Mount Carmel Health System opened a 60-bed hospital in Dublin last spring, a new location rather than expansion.

Hospital officials say they need the room. Population in the seven Central Ohio counties alone is forecasted at 2.75 million in 2050, up 26% from 2025 estimates, according to data from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission. And 16% of those people will be 65 or older, up from 14% today.

In recent years, Delaware and Franklin counties have led the state in population growth.

The largest Columbus hospitals also see patients from across Ohio and nationwide. As medical and technical advances move more surgeries and treatment regiments to outpatient settings, patients admitted to hospitals are sicker, especially at large multi-specialty referral centers.

Hospital expansions don't appear as robust elsewhere.

In Ohio, the Cleveland Clinic is adding about 200 beds in two proj-

BY THE NUMBERS

-17.7K

Decline in the number of staffed beds in non-federal U.S. acute care and specialty hospitals from 2019 to 2025

-2.1K

Decline in such beds in Ohio from 2019-24, the latest data available.

SOURCE: AMERICAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

ects. Cincinnati Children's Hospital is building a 72-bed expansion.

Other fast-growing cities are adding hospital capacity, including Nashville, Orlando, Houston and Dallas, but typically by a few hundred new beds. A 432-bed tower recently announced in Detroit will only replace old space.

Meanwhile, Central Ohio outpatient expansions continue apace, including Ohio State's \$188 million outpatient campus in Powell. Construction is set to start during the year on a \$228 million OhioHealth outpatient cancer center in Columbus and a Children's Close to Home in New Albany.

Another project to keep an eye on: OhioHealth is seeking rezoning in Columbus to allow "hospital use" for the former Big Lots headquarters on Dublin Granville Road.

Also in 2026, regulators will decide whether to approve OhioHealth's acquisition of 200-bed Fairfield Medical. Both boards have endorsed the merger. It would become the 17th member of the \$7 billion system; the farthest is 100 miles from Columbus in Van Wert.

"Despite the competitive nature of the greater Columbus market ... OhioHealth's leading (primary service area) market share improved (over the past year) and is notably greater than the share of its next largest competitor (OSU)," a Fitch Ratings analysis said in the fall.

The deal would leave three independent community hospitals in the region: Newark's Licking Memorial Health Systems, county-owned Memorial Health in Marysville and London-based Madison Health.

OhioHealth made four of the 19 acquisitions statewide since 2015, according to the Ohio Hospital Association. Three hospitals joined Cleveland Clinic and Nationwide Children's acquired its Toledo peer.

Nine Ohio hospitals, both independent and system members, closed since 2018, according to Ohio Hospital Association.

PASSENGER RAIL FACING MAJOR MILESTONES IN '26

More details about proposed service routes through Columbus will start taking shape in the next stage of planning.

After years of setbacks, studies and positioning, Amtrak’s potential return to Central Ohio is staring down its most consequential planning phase yet. ¶ This year, proposals will move beyond broad corridor concepts into detailed service development, according to leaders who spoke with *Columbus Business First*. ¶ “(2026) will be a big, very exciting year and a very historic year for passenger rail in Central Ohio,” said Parag Agrawal, chief mobility and infrastructure officer for the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission. ¶ “We are expecting some big milestones to be achieved.”

There are two proposed passenger rail routes that could pass through Central Ohio. One is Ohio’s long-discussed 3C+D route, which would link Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati. The other is a multi-state route connecting Chicago, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Columbus and Pittsburgh called Midwest Connect.

Both corridors are part of the Federal Railroad Administration’s Corridor ID, a framework for passenger rail projects created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. In 2026, the routes are expected to move from preliminary planning and concepts into the program’s central planning phase, which changes the focus to detailed service development before advancing toward engineering and design. “This is the time where we kind of



BY ZACHARY JARRELL
zjarrell@bizjournals.com

shift into the more robust planning stage, where we look at things like where the stops are going to be, the frequency of the trains, even down to the granular details of where the trains start and end each day,” said John Esterly, executive director of the passenger rail advocacy group All Aboard Ohio. Agrawal said this step is where “all the questions people have will be answered.” The fast-growing Columbus region hasn’t had Amtrak service since 1979, when the National Limited route was discontinued. In the decades since, proposals to restore passenger rail service to the region have surfaced periodically. The region appeared closest to a revival in the late 2000s, when Ohio secured federal funding for a passenger rail initiative, only for then-Gov. John Kasich to return the money



after taking office in 2011, effectively halting the effort. “There is this sense of, ‘We’ve been here before.’ We had a carrot dangled in front of our nose and we still don’t have passenger rail,” Esterly said. “That’s a very true and a very valid concern that we hear across the state.” Still, Agrawal and Esterly said this

time is different. Part of the renewed confidence stems from how the federal Corridor ID program is structured, particularly its emphasis on funding early-stage planning work before asking states and regions to commit to larger construction costs. This second step is funded primarily with federal dollars, with only a 10% local match required.



GETTY IMAGES

"It's a completely different model for developing passenger rail corridors than we've seen in the past," Esterly said. "And I think it's going to produce a lot better results."

Despite the optimism, leaders cautioned that the process is complex and that setbacks are possible.

"This is a big infrastructure project," Agrawal said, referring partic-

ularly to the Midwest Connect proposal. "These things can take time."

The route, for example, would largely operate on freight rail corridors, adding more complexity.

"We do not want to make this to be freight versus passenger rail," Agrawal said. "We want to grow both of them."

For 3C+D, Esterly said he is close-

Amtrak trains haven't served Columbus since 1979.

ly watching the state budget process, since, unlike Midwest Connect, the corridor's non-federal funding would be tied to state appropriations through the Ohio Rail Development Commission.

"The only thing that would maybe play into a timing factor would be if this step would get completed before the next budget cycle," Esterly said.



A look at proposed routes for expanded passenger rail service in Ohio.

"We may be delayed just waiting on that budget cycle to approve the next round of funding."

All Aboard Ohio raised concerns in September that a draft of the commission's State Rail Plan "largely sidesteps" passenger rail.

"Instead of presenting a bold path forward, it positions passenger rail as a secondary consideration," Esterly said then. "That disconnect should concern Ohio leaders."

"To give them some grace, they really don't have a need to discuss passenger rail," he said. "I would imagine that as we get further in the planning process – optimistically once construction begins on those improvements – that it will become a larger part of the rail plan."

If everything stays on track, Esterly said, the "most optimistic timeline" has Ohioans using passenger rail service in the early 2030s.

That's why both Agrawal and Esterly said it's important to keep expectations in check.

"Our goal is very incremental," Esterly said. "When we're done with (step two), we're going to move on to step three. And then when we're done with step three, we're going to start talking seriously about those capital improvements."

CENTRAL OHIO MARKET POISED FOR GROWTH

Industry observers expect lower interest rates to bring more buyers into a market that’s welcoming many new residents as well.

Columbus is poised to be one of the nation’s hottest housing markets in 2026, according to a new report from the National Association of Realtors, thanks to rising incomes, regional job growth and affordability that outpaces most major cities. ¶ Of the top 10 housing markets to watch on the association’s list, Columbus saw the second-fastest growth in income levels, with 7.2% growth from 2024. Despite home prices also increasing, median household income was growing faster than home prices on average in 2025.

NAR data from June suggested more than 41,000 households in Columbus could afford the median house price if mortgage rates dropped from 7% to 6%. Columbus Realtors 2025 President Buffie Patterson said about 10% of those households will purchase a home in the near future.

“That’s more than 4,000 households that could move into a new home if rates dropped just a little bit,” she said.

Rates are currently above 6% for a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage, according to Freddie Mac.

Stuart Spalt, a branch manager for CrossCountry Mortgage, said even small rate changes have a significant impact on housing activity.

“When rates dip – even by a quarter point – we typically see a noticeable increase in buyer engagement,” Spalt said in an email. “More pre-approvals, more applications and buy-



BY GRACE
McCORMICK
gmccormick@
bizjournals.com

ers who had been on the sidelines re-entering the market.

“Conversely, when rates move up, activity doesn’t disappear, but it becomes more selective. Buyers focus more on affordability, adjust price expectations or look for creative structures such as buy-downs or adjustable-rate products to manage payments.”

Spalt said mortgage lending was up in 2025 compared to 2024, which he credited in part to “pent-up demand and limited housing supply.”

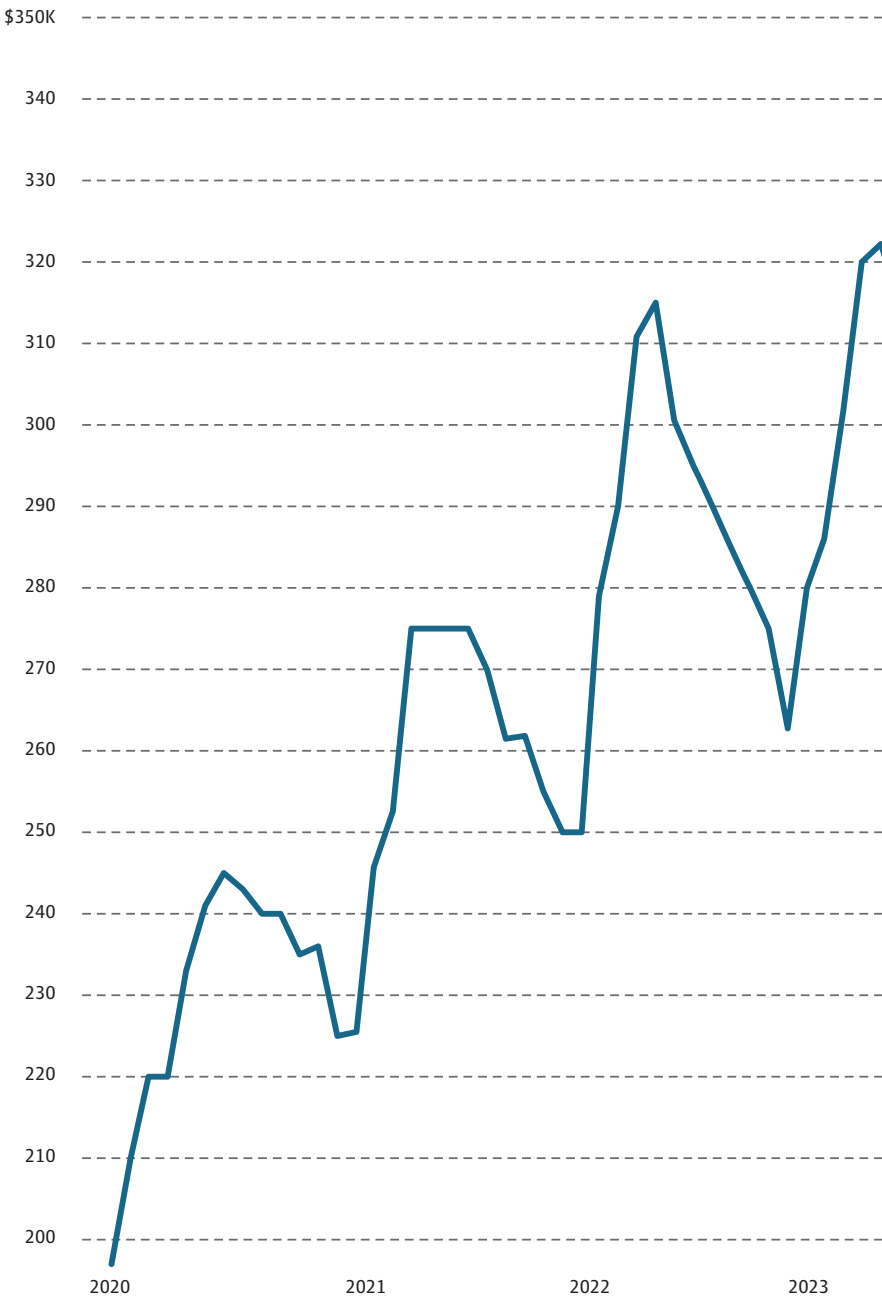
He said he expects steady growth in 2026 lending.

“Not a surge, but a healthier, more sustainable level of activity as buyers and sellers increasingly accept today’s rate environment as the ‘new normal,’” Spalt said.

Although Zillow and Realtor.com say mortgage rates likely will stay at 6% or higher in 2026, Redfin and the National Association of Realtors pre-

MEDIAN SALES PRICE, 2020-’25

The annual median sales price in Central Ohio has increased 41.5% from 2020’s \$232,000 to 2025’s \$328,500 from January to November. Monthly median prices typically dip each fall in the Columbus metro region.

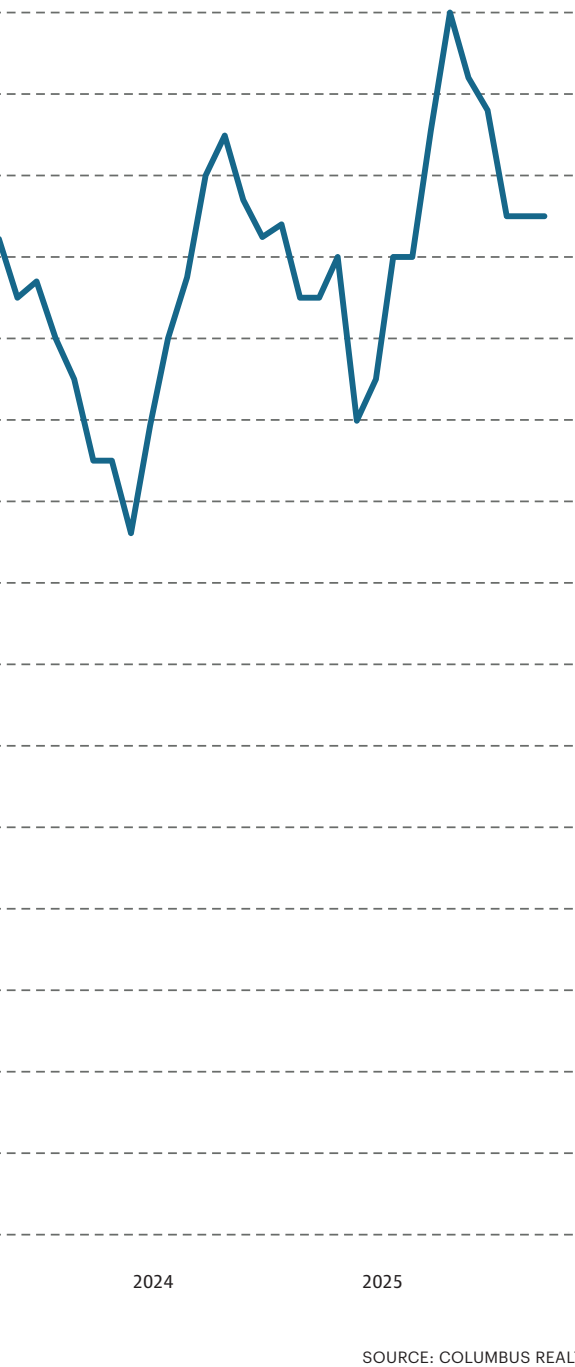


dict rates will decrease slightly.

The Wall Street Journal reported Dec. 9 that “Columbus’ longtime Goldilocks status as a successful city with still-affordable housing is now on shaky ground” because of rising demand and expected construction decreases.

The National Association of Realtors estimates nationally that an average household has 67% of the needed income to comfortably afford a median-priced home. In Columbus, about 76% of households are in that position.

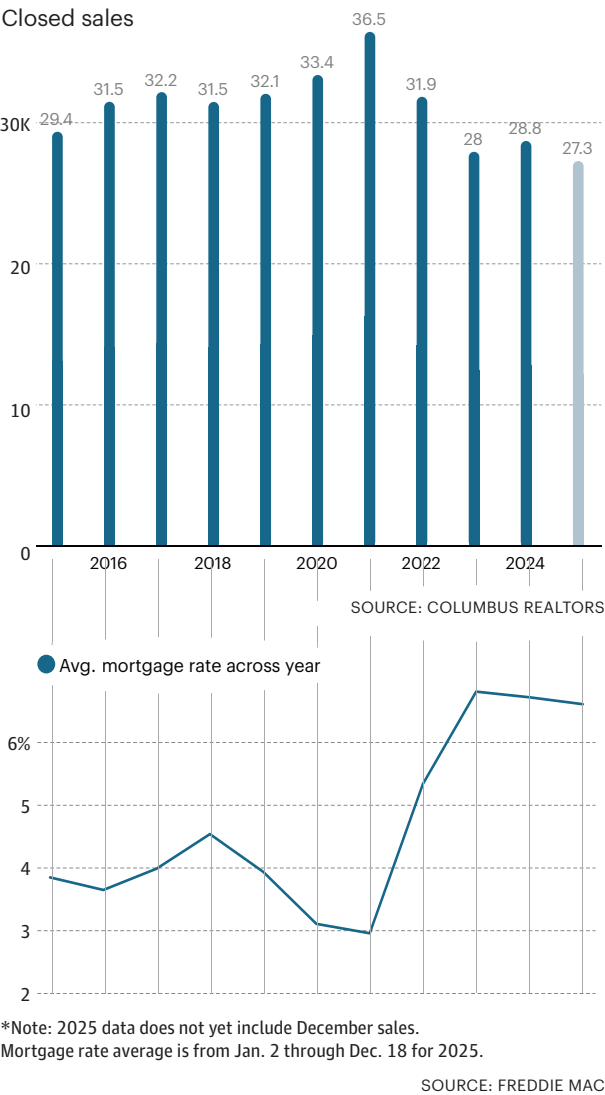
“Compared to larger cities, we’re



actually pretty affordable,” Patterson said. “We’re almost \$100,000 below the national median home price. I don’t necessarily see that going away anytime soon, certainly not in 2026.” Patterson also said she expects more renters to become homebuyers in 2026 as they weigh the costs

of renting versus a home mortgage. According to Zillow, the average rent in Columbus was \$1,438 in November 2025, compared to \$1,100 in December 2020. New Albany and south Columbus saw increased interest by potential homebuyers in 2025 thanks to large

ANNUAL SALES, 2016-’25
2021 showcased the most closings and most sales volume in Central Ohio history, aided by an average 30-year mortgage rate of less than 3%.



34.6% compared to the same period in 2024; Johnstown-Monroe saw an average 25.6% increase from sales year over year. Median sales prices also increased. The median price in New Albany-Plain rose by 15.7% in November 2025 compared to the same month in 2024. And Johnstown’s November median was 62% higher – the highest year-over-year increase among all local school districts. Patterson said smaller communities such as Lithopolis, Buckeye Valley and Obetz have seen increased interest, too. “There are new homes being built and more sales in smaller communities within a 40-minute drive of Columbus that are close but might be more affordable and offer a suburban or rural feel,” Patterson said. “The cool thing is, more corporations are building in places like New Albany, which I think will then grow outward like Columbus has. So it just makes our circle bigger, which is exciting.” Patterson said northern suburbs traditionally have grown faster than areas south of Columbus, but this year has seen “growth all around (Interstate) 270.” June saw the highest median sales price of the year at \$350,000 across the region. The median sales price across Central Ohio for the first 11 months of 2025 was \$328,500, representing an increase of 2.7% over 2024. Patterson said she expects home prices to increase by 3% to 4% in 2026. “I don’t think we’ll see anything crazy like the 10% jumps in 2021,” she said, adding that mortgage rates fell to 3% that year. The key indicator Patterson said she is keeping her eye on for 2026 is overall confidence in the economy. “When people are uncertain, they don’t make large purchases,” she said. “Central Ohio is a bit insulated from what we see at the national level, but it does impact us. The region is doing really well economically, but if something were to shift, that could be a cause for concern.”



MARKETING

C-Suite Awards revamped for 2026

BY MARK SOMERSON
msomerson@bizjournals.com

Columbus Business First has reimagined our annual C-Suite Awards as Executives of the Year to better reflect the diverse leadership that drives success across organizations in Central Ohio.

The changes we are making are more than just a new name. By expanding the focus of the program, we aim to celebrate outstanding executives who demonstrate innovation, impact and excellence, whether they lead finance, operations, technology, marketing or other critical functions.

Nominations are currently open through Jan. 30. Some nominations might be internally generated.

Executives at the vice president level and above across all disciplines are eligible. CEOs are still welcome, along with CFOs, COOs, CIOs, CMOs and others. Previous honorees are eligible.

Our gala awards reception will be held on April 28 from 4-7 p.m. at the Exchange at Bridge Park and the 2026 class will be highlighted in a special section published online and in our May 1 issue.

A committee of judges from *Business First* will determine the honorees based on the following questions, with an emphasis on candidates' most recent accomplishments:

- How has the nominee contributed to developing and carrying out the organization's business plan?
- What has the nominee accomplished over the past year in particular that contributed to the organization's success?
- How has the nominee contributed to the advancement of their industry or profession?

RESTAURANTS



DAN EATON | CBF

Viva Mexican Kitchen will replace Nada in the Arena District.

Viva Mexican coming to Arena District

Fans of Mexican cuisine will still have an option in the former Nada space

BY DAN EATON
deaton@bizjournals.com

An Arena District spot that was a destination for Mexican fare for a decade will again be home to a Mexican restaurant.

Viva Mexican Kitchen will take over the 6,000-square-foot space at 220 W. Nationwide Blvd. that for the previous 10 years had been Nada.

Coming soon signs are up in the restaurant's windows and approvals for new signage are moving through the permitting process.

Viva Mexican Kitchen is a new name, but it's coming from the Macias family, who are experienced local operators.

The family, now in its second generation, also owns Fronteras at

6608 E. Broad St., which opened in 2018.

"We are incredibly excited to be opening Viva at the Arena District this upcoming year," they said in an email. "With over 15 years in the restaurant industry, this opportunity means a great deal to us, as it allows us to share with the community more than just our food."

The menu promises authentic Mexican cuisine highlighted with traditional flavors and fresh ingredients.

"We are passionate about creating a space where guests can connect, celebrate and truly experience the richness of Mexican culinary traditions," they wrote. "We can't wait to welcome the community and be part of such a vibrant area."

Early 2026 is the target for opening.

Nationwide Realty Investors, developer of the Arena District, is the landlord.

Nada closed in May. That Cincinnati-based restaurant was more

"(T)his opportunity means a great deal to us."

The Macias family behind Viva Mexican Kitchen

of a modern Mexican spin on the cuisine.

It opened in late 2014 on the ground floor of the Columbia Gas of Ohio office building across the street from Nationwide Arena.

The switch from Nada to another Mexican concept is just the latest such transition around town.

At least three Local Cantinas were sold to new operators who opened new Mexican concepts in the spaces, including El Vaquero Mexican Restaurant, which took over the Short North space last year.

Other local chains such as Don Tequila Mexican Grill & Cantina and Habaneros Fresh Mexican Grill have opened new restaurants recently.

Smaller operators to join the scene of late include Lupita's on the South Side, Blue Agave in Gahanna and Los Altos in Westerville.

On the more upscale end of Mexican cuisine, Mezcla opened in Italian Village this year and Chef Joshua Dalton is planning Rosalita downtown next year.



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SOURCE: LINKEDIN/EDELMAN 2018 STUDY

Marketplace

EMPLOYMENT

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF ACTION

BEFORE THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN

RE:The Practice of Architecture

John Miller
Focus Estimating
Columbus, OH

Case No.: 2025-053851 & 2025-053856
License No.: Unlicensed

The Board of Architecture and Interior Design issued a Notice and Order to Cease and Desist against you. A copy may be obtained by contacting, David K. Minacci, Esquire, Manausa, Shaw & Minacci, P.A., 140-D W 1st Street, St. George Island, FL 32328, (850) 799-1882.

If no response is received from you regarding the above-referenced matter by February 13, 2026, an informal hearing may be scheduled before the Board of Architecture and Interior Design, pursuant to Chapter 120, Florida Statutes.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the individual or agency sending notice not later than seven days prior to the proceeding at the address given on notice. Telephone: (850) 257-6067; 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (v), via Florida Relay Service.

Run Dates: 1/2/26, 1/9/26, 1/16/26 and 1/23/26

Market Research Analyst

wanted by Beauty Supply Company in Columbus, OH. Must have 2 Yrs of exp. as market research analyst in any field. Apply to: USHR 161, Inc., 1666 E. Dublin Granville Rd., Columbus, OH 43229.

Market Research Analyst

wanted by Home Health Care Company in Columbus, OH. Must have 2 years of experience as Market Research Analyst in any field. Apply to: Raphael Health Care, LLC, 3254 Henderson Road, Columbus, OH 43220.

Database Administrator

wanted by Home Health Care Company in Columbus, OH. Must have Master's Degree in Information Systems Engineering & Management or related field. Apply to: Raphael Health Care, LLC, 3254 Henderson Road, Columbus, OH 43220.

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Columbus Public Records is a weekly summary of public records and legal filings collected from courthouses, government offices and other federal, state and municipal data portals covering Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties.

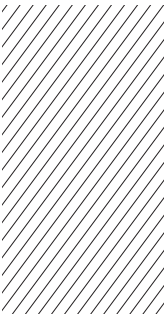
NOTES ON THE DATA
These pages offer a limited view of the records collected weekly by American City Business Journals, parent company of *Columbus Business First*.

Listings for each category may vary from week to week because of information availability and space constraints. Records by category and count will vary by week due to normal volatility in recording volume, information availability, filing schedules and access constraints regulated by each public-filing entity.

The scorecard at right tracks records for the entire calendar year to provide a global view of the key categories collected.

SEE ALL THE DATA
To see all the public records from every category collected for the Columbus region, visit bit.ly/CBFRecords.

QUESTIONS
To learn more about collection methods, coverage areas and usage restrictions related to American City Business Journals, please contact us at 877-593-4157.



C B F

scorecard

A weekly and year-to-date summary of public records collected by *Columbus Business First*.

Bankruptcies ▲ 0 Current Week	Building Permits ▲ 0 Current Week
3 Week Prior	0 Week Prior
1	104
2026	2026
26	2,709
2025	2025
18	2,811

Federal Tax Liens ▼ 0 Current Week	Judgments ▼ 0 Current Week
6 Week Prior	1 Week Prior
0	5
2026	2026
82	360
2025	2025
74	362

Lawsuits ▼ 0 Current Week	Mechanics Liens ▼ 0 Current Week
37 Week Prior	7 Week Prior
67	3
2026	2026
2,950	157
2025	2025
2,535	195

Real Estate Transactions ▲ 0 Current Week	State Tax Liens ▲ 0 Current Week
536 Week Prior	2 Week Prior
447	3
2026	2026
26,659	1,400
2025	2025
22,629	1,546

NOTE: Records collected from Jan. 1 through the current reporting period

Plotting the Permits

The map at right offers a geographic breakdown of some of the largest commercial and residential building permits filed during the current collection period. Details on specific locations, parties, dollar values and the nature of each project, when available, can be found in the table.

Permits,
listed by
estimated
dollar value of
project

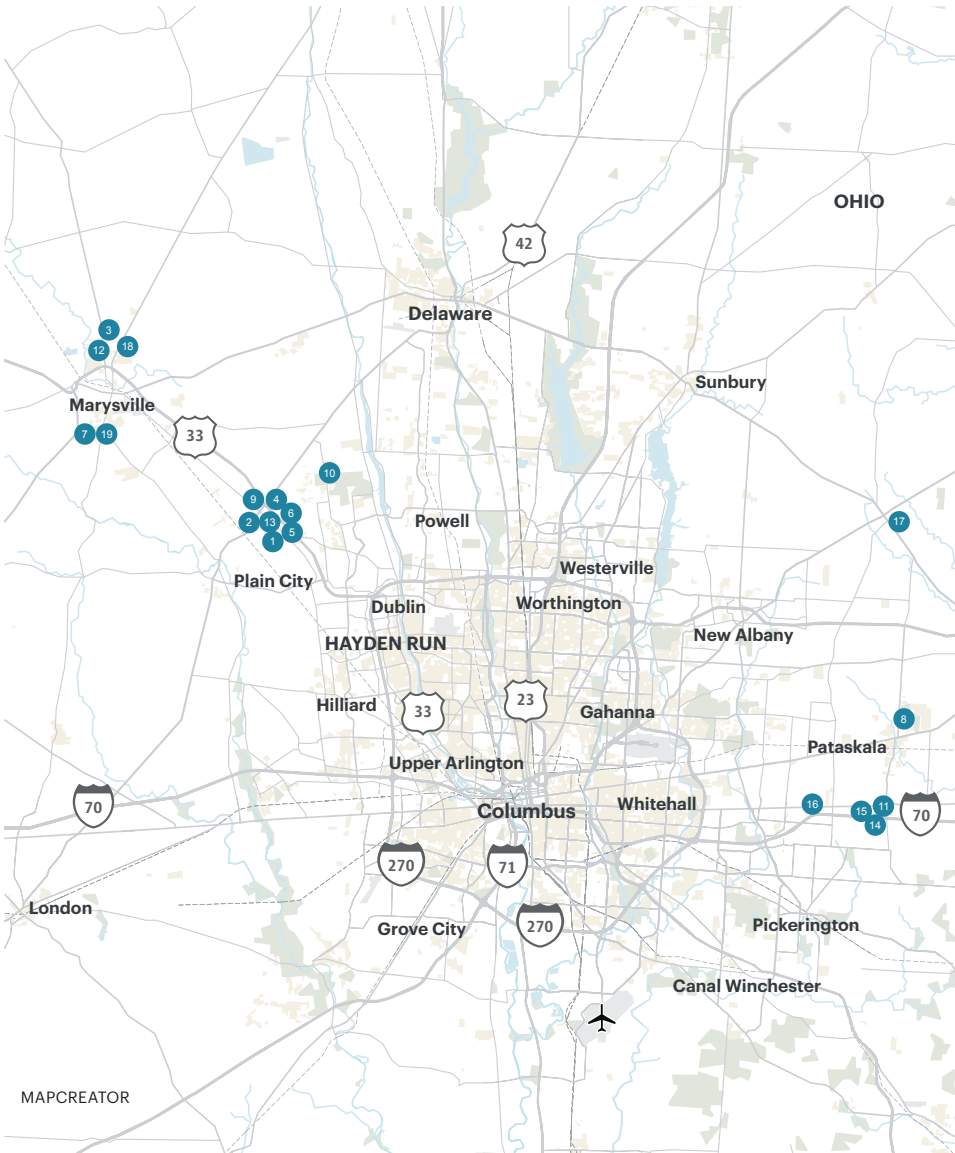
MAPPED	CONTRACTOR	SITE ADDRESS	PROPERTY DESCRIPTION	VALUE	RECORDING DATE
1	Rockford Homes	9408 Highlands Ave., Plain City 43064	N/A	\$641,150	11/04/25
2	Pulte Homes of Ohio LLC	9160 Horseshoe St., Plain City 43064	N/A	\$638,100	11/07/25
3	Pulte Homes of Ohio LLC	2290 Hubbard Rd., Marysville 43040	N/A	\$626,600	11/17/25
4	Pulte Homes of Ohio LLC	9333 Vista Ln., Plain City 43064	N/A	\$620,740	11/17/25
5	Rockford Homes Inc.	9361 Highlands Ave., Plain City 43064	N/A	\$610,100	11/18/25
6	Pulte Homes of Ohio LLC	9303 Vista Ln., Plain City 43064	N/A	\$598,880	11/05/25
7	Maronda Homes LLC of Ohio	185 Black Oak Ave., Marysville 43040	N/A	\$594,295	11/19/25
8	N/A	122 Ruby Rd. SW, Pataskala 43062	N/A	\$584,661	11/25/25
9	Rockford Homes	10152 Durham Ct., Plain City 43064	N/A	\$576,000	11/18/25
10	M/I Homes of Central Ohio LLC	7231 River Birch Rd., Plain City 43064	N/A	\$563,750	11/20/25
11	N/A	402 Fannin Dr. SW, Pataskala 43062	N/A	\$547,330	11/07/25
12	Pulte Homes of Ohio LLC	154 Figleaf Ln., Marysville 43040	N/A	\$546,380	11/25/25
13	Pulte Homes of Ohio LLC	9168 Horseshoe St., Plain City 43064	N/A	\$543,410	11/13/25
14	N/A	312 Reign Way SW, Pataskala 43062	N/A	\$534,480	11/10/25
15	N/A	406 Fannin Dr. SW, Pataskala 43062	N/A	\$527,440	11/25/25
16	N/A	160 Rolen, Etna 43068	N/A	\$513,000	11/05/25
17	N/A	211 De Rosa Dr., Johnstown 43031	N/A	\$510,000	11/03/25
18	Pulte Homes of Ohio LLC	184 Figleaf Ln., Marysville 43040	N/A	\$501,760	11/12/25
19	Maronda Homes LLC of Ohio	165 Black Oak Ave., Marysville 43040	N/A	\$501,000	11/13/25

Real Estate Transactions

Commercial
A sampling of new commercial deed transactions collected for *Columbus Business First*.

SELLER'S NAME	BUYER'S NAME	ADDRESS	JURISDICTION	COST
Westar Polaris III LLC	REI Westar III LLC	440 Polaris Pkwy., Westerville 43082	Delaware County	\$12,700,000
Ravindra Kumar and Mayankkumar D. Vaidya	First Hotel LLC	1313 W. St. James Lutheran Ln., Columbus 43228	Franklin County	\$3,250,000
Delaware Senior LP and Delaware Senior LP	Arthur Place Apartments LP	759 Woodford Way, Delaware 43015	Delaware County	\$3,183,333
King Avenue 1 0 LLC and Manitowac Fund LLC	SMBC Leasing and Finance Inc.	991 E. Johnstown Rd., Gahanna 43230	Franklin County	\$2,900,000
4045 Lakeview Partners LLC	Royce & Janice Carville	4045 Hamilton Square Blvd., Groveport 43125	Franklin County	\$2,425,000
Letitia Powell and Christopher R. Powell	Matthew R. Jones and Angela R. Jones	5455 Davis Dr. Rd. SE, Newark 43056	Licking County	\$1,000,000
Ernest L. Drumm	Boundless Strategic Resources Inc.	1987 Coffman Rd., Newark 43055	Licking County	\$765,000
Jeffrey Chris Robinson Jr. and Carley Elizabeth Coleman	Blain Eugene Borden	294 Shady Hollow Dr., Commercial Point 43116	Pickaway County	\$399,000

SOURCE: ICE MORTGAGE TECHNOLOGY



Liens

The following is a sampling of federal and state tax liens from county recorder and county clerk of courts offices collected for *Columbus Business First*.

FEDERAL TAX LIENS

Franklin County

Zimam Holdings LLC, 415 E. Mound St., Columbus 43215, \$160,297, (1065/940/941), 12/05/25.

Cornerstone Supported Living LLC, 773 Brooksedge Plaza Dr., Westerville 43081, \$150,349, (1120/941), 12/05/25.

Elijah Security Intelligence & Investigation LLC, 635 Park Meadow Rd. #214, Westerville 43081, \$17,864, (941), 12/05/25.

Howard Industries Inc., 1840 Progress Ave., Columbus 43207, \$18,317, (941),

12/09/25.

Excellent Community Home Healthcare LLC, 2999 E. Dublin Granville Rd. #10, Columbus 43231, \$17,309, (941), 12/09/25.

Main Street Family Medicine LLC, 881 E. Main St., Columbus 43205, \$12,967, (941), 12/15/25.

FEDERAL TAX LIEN RELEASES

Franklin County

Paul J. Wright, 1465 Trentwood Rd., Upper Arlington 43221, \$24,873, (CIVP), 12/15/25.

Franklin University, 201 S. Grant Ave., Columbus 43215, \$23,597, (941/990), 12/15/25.

STATE TAX LIENS

Delaware County

Due Amici Restaurant Ltd., 1176 Sherborne Ln., Powell 43065, \$18,879, (sales), 12/09/25.

Fairfield County

Nathan D. Pitney, 9545 Meadow Wood Dr., Pickerington 43147, \$50,681, (withholding), case #2025 SL 05629, 12/09/25.

The Week in Lawsuits

The following is a sampling of civil lawsuits from the county clerk of courts offices collected for *Columbus Business First*.

PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	RECORDING DATE	JURISDICTION
Kyle Benzle	Paul Panico Esq.	12/09/25	Franklin County
Indus Holdings LLC	Access Ohio LLC	12/09/25	Franklin County
Vectory Security Inc.	Reliant Home Healthcare Service LLC	12/09/25	Franklin County
Melissa Goulet/Thomas Goulet	Progressive Specialty Insurance Co./UMR Inc./Optum et al.	12/09/25	Franklin County
Mark Bargo/Juliann Garrett	HHDCO LLC/Kenneth Howell/Ian McAuliffe	12/10/25	Franklin County
R&R General Contracting LLC	Luke Freshwater/Silver Lake Bison Farm LLC/Megan Freshwater	12/03/25	Licking County
ISAG Ltd.	Alex Vinash Columbus LLC/Leonardo Munoz/aka Alex Vinash	12/09/25	Franklin County
Michelle Drakulich	Fairway Independent Mortgage Corp.	12/10/25	Franklin County
Heather Ginther	Peach & Lily Inc./Leann Page	12/09/25	Franklin County
Zach Sammons	Jason Hofacker/dba Triple H Farm Equipment LLC/Triple H Farm Equipment LLC	12/01/25	Licking County
Dr. Ricardo Salinas Jr.	Car KO LLC/Cap City Motors LLC/Ledio Konomi	12/05/25	Franklin County
Jennifer Kundert Fiduciary	The Laurels of Walden Park LLC/The Laurels of Walden Park/Laurel Ohio Operations Group LLC et al.	12/09/25	Franklin County
George N. Millhoan III/Elijah George Millhoan a minor by and through his parent and natural guardian	Speedway LLC/dba Speedway/State of Ohio Department of Medicaid et al.	12/08/25	Franklin County
Morgan Toops Guardian	Rescare Ohio/London/Rescare Ohio/Voca Corp. of Ohio et al.	12/05/25	Franklin County
Noya Lanzer	Progressive Specialty Insurance Co./Nexclaim Recoveries/Ohiohealth et al.	12/09/25	Franklin County
Nina Jackson	Brittany Crowell/The Villas & Estates at Eden of Whitehall/James Jones et al.	12/05/25	Franklin County
Earnest O. Dublin	Boulevard Apartments/Ardmore Property LLC et al.	12/09/25	Franklin County
Deborah Davis	McDonald's USA LLC/dba McDonald's/McDonald's Restaurant of Ohio Inc. et al.	12/08/25	Franklin County
Theresa Lynn Dutch Ford as guardian of Morgan Elizabeth Roszman/Theresa Lynn Dutch Ford et al.	Ohiohealth Corp./Ohiohealth Mansfield Hospital/Melissa Lyn Paskey MD	12/09/25	Franklin County
Jobsohio	Chippewa Industries Inc.	12/09/25	Franklin County
City of Reynoldsburg OH	Global Insight Productions LLC	12/12/25	Licking County
Bindery & Specialties Pressworks Inc.	Rush Truck Leasing Inc.	12/08/25	Madison County
Depositors Insurance Co.	Progressive Casualty Insurance Co.	12/09/25	Franklin County
Healthcare Online and Medical Exchange Inc. dba Bexley Therapy Services	Alta Home Health Care LLC/Derrick Pena	12/10/25	Franklin County
Amy K. Davis deceased/Ian D. Fijalkovich Administrator	REM Ohio Inc./Ohio Department of Medicaid	12/10/25	Fairfield County
EMS1 Inc.	All Seasons Landscape Services LLC/Jonathan Balcerek	12/10/25	Delaware County
Thunder Electric LLC	USTRG/Moamen B. Elsheikh	12/10/25	Delaware County
The Zanesville and Western Railway Co.	The State of Ohio Rail Development Commission/The Muskingum Valley Park District	12/08/25	Franklin County



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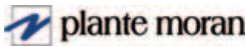
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