

## 16 Notable Economic Development Highlights

1. Jack Schultz listed Van Wert in *Boomtown USA* as one of 8 communities in Ohio in the top 2.5% (367 of 15,800) of “agurbs” for business development, job creation and lifestyle.
2. In 2004, Van Wert County, based on commute statistics, became part of a Combined Statistical Area with Lima and Wapakoneta. The 2010 census will likely show a slight increase in population for the CSA.
3. In 2007, Van Wert County was ranked by Site Selection Magazine in the top 100 Micropolitan areas based on development of new and expanded facilities. Other Ohio micros that made the list were Wooster, Sidney, Findlay and Zanesville.
4. In Feb., 2008, the 1,600 acre super site was featured in national publication Site Selection magazine, providing free exposure to decision makers worldwide.
5. Main Street Van Wert was formed in 2000, became a nationally designated Main Street Program in 2004, effective in reducing vacancy rates from 50-20%.
6. In 2007, the Niswonger Performing Arts Center became the only major regional entertainment center located in a small town in the Northwest Ohio.
7. In 2005 the *Welcome Home* brand was created to synchronize marketing efforts between community development partnership organizations in Van Wert.
8. Over \$12M in state and federal grants have been leveraged for community economic development and business development projects between 2000-2009.
9. Tourism becomes BIG business in Van Wert County, growing three new major events that attract thousands of people, and dollars, to the community.
10. Towne Center becomes a reality in 2005, creating at least 400 net new retail and service jobs and providing an opportunity for highway projects, i.e. restaurants.
11. Combined local loan portfolio for two local revolving loans funds is over \$2 million with 48 loans and over 375 direct jobs created in less than 10 years.
12. In 2005, Van Wert CIC starts up the first rural business incubator in the region, which now houses five startup businesses and has graduated two. 67 new small businesses have been counseled/assisted, creating 230 jobs.
13. Vision Industrial Park grows from one business with 40 jobs to eight companies with a total almost ½ million sq. ft. of building area and about 500 jobs.
14. Van Wert ED Advisory Group becomes model for leadership and collaboration – receiving award from the National Association of Community Development Extension Professions for “best practices”.
15. Vantage Career Center becomes a satellite site for Wright State University and Northwest College, offering college credit courses in nursing, business and technical programs, including customized training.
16. Hospital and Airport facilities are recognized and supported as key local assets that set Van Wert apart from neighboring communities, create jobs and provide ED opportunities.
17. A \$5 million Job Ready Sites grant was awarded in November, 2008 by the Ohio Department of Development to develop a 1,600 acre super site.

