

**SMALL  
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NEWSLETTER  
FROM YOUR FRIENDS  
AT SMALL NATION



# MAIN STREET

## MARKETING NEWS

WHERE SMALL MARKETING IDEAS CAN ADD BIG  
DOLLARS TO THE BOTTOM LINE

Q4 2020

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## Two Student Groups Visit Bellefontaine

Small Nation exists not only to revitalize downtown Bellefontaine and help other communities across the country reignite the vibrancy and energy in their historic downtowns, but it also exists to inspire the next generation of community leaders, entrepreneurs, and creators to build their business and invest their time and energy in small towns, as well. That is why we have been so excited to be working with two groups of students and faculty members from Ohio Northern University in Ada, OH.

Dr. David Strittmatter brought his Public History students to downtown Bellefontaine recently for an architectural walking tour of downtown Bellefontaine. While the Public History curriculum focuses primarily on how

>> turn to page 2



## Which list are you on this holiday season?

**I**n case you haven't noticed, I've been on my best behavior all year.

(I wish the year had been on its best behavior, but that's a topic for another time.)

I'm not concerned about earning extravagant Christmas gifts, but I do want to prove to myself that, for once, I can stay on Santa's Nice List instead of his



**MAC'S BLOG**

Naughty List.

(Yes, I've learned to go with the flow and stop getting weirded out by the whole "he sees you when you're sleeping" dynamic. I was briefly obsessed with Big Brother when I ate that homework assignment on Orwell's 1984; but by the time I finished digesting the book

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We are so excited to working with the team of professionals at Choice Properties Real Estate in designing and creating their new Downtown Bellefontaine office.

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A little about MAC: Mac is Jason's 5-year old active Sheltie who loves veggies - green beans to be exact, but he eats all kinds of other vegetables too. He hangs out with Jason when he's working at Grandma Jackie's house with his other pal Zoe, who is a 76lb German shepherd. Mac thinks that he is just as big as Zoe, but he's actually a little dog with a lot of confidence. He loves to play soccer and run outside, especially if he can corral other dogs in the neighborhood. He also enjoys stealing and hiding socks. Mac wanted to write a blog post, and we didn't have the heart to say no. We take no responsibility for the goofy things he comes up with. He does love to receive letters, though.

## Mac's Blog .....from Page 1

report on *A Tale of Two Cities*, the moment had passed. It was the *best* of times; it was the *worst* of ... 3-ring binders.)

I'm the first to admit that I'm not perfect. I'll come clean about my shortcomings. Count yourself lucky. *Usually* when I come clean, everyone gets soapy water slung all over their clothing. ("Sorry about your wallet. Guess I didn't warn you about the *money laundering* operation.")

I do a decent job of staying out of trouble when I'm at home; it's in *public* that some buttinsky always puts me under a microscope. Yes, I can handle the Elf on the Shelf, just not the Narc in The Park.

I've been boning up on etiquette. I'm quite the gentleman, pulling out chairs for guests and holding the door open for the ladies. Of course, it's only a *doggie door*. But that one supermodel took me up on the offer! Dibs on her for my next limbo partner!

I've tried reducing my carbon pawprint this year, but I'm not a fanatic like Bingo down the street. He makes a point of chasing only *electric* cars. And instead of hanging his head out the car window, he hangs a *windmill* out the car window!

I have behaved myself on the internet this year. I haven't *trolled* anybody at all. (Unless you count the Three Billy Goats Gruff, but those ruffians really had it coming to them.)

I have also refrained from prank phone calls, even the timeless one about "Is your refrigerator running? Well, you'd better catch it!" (How did this one ever become popular? *If* your fridge sprouts legs and starts running, what are you supposed to *do* if you catch it? Say, "As long as you're demon-possessed and probably preoccupied, I'd like to borrow your Grey Poupon"?)

I have tried not insisting on being the center of attention this year. Wish I could say the same for my frenemy Duke. He has perpetrated so many "photo bombs," he has little red and green wires sticking out of him!

Merry Christmas and good luck with your resolutions for next year.

Maybe by the next time we meet, I will have solved my *separation anxiety* problem.

You know who really has separation anxiety? Try coming between Saint Nick and a big platter of cookies. Hello, Elf on the Gurney!



## Two Student Groups...from Page 1

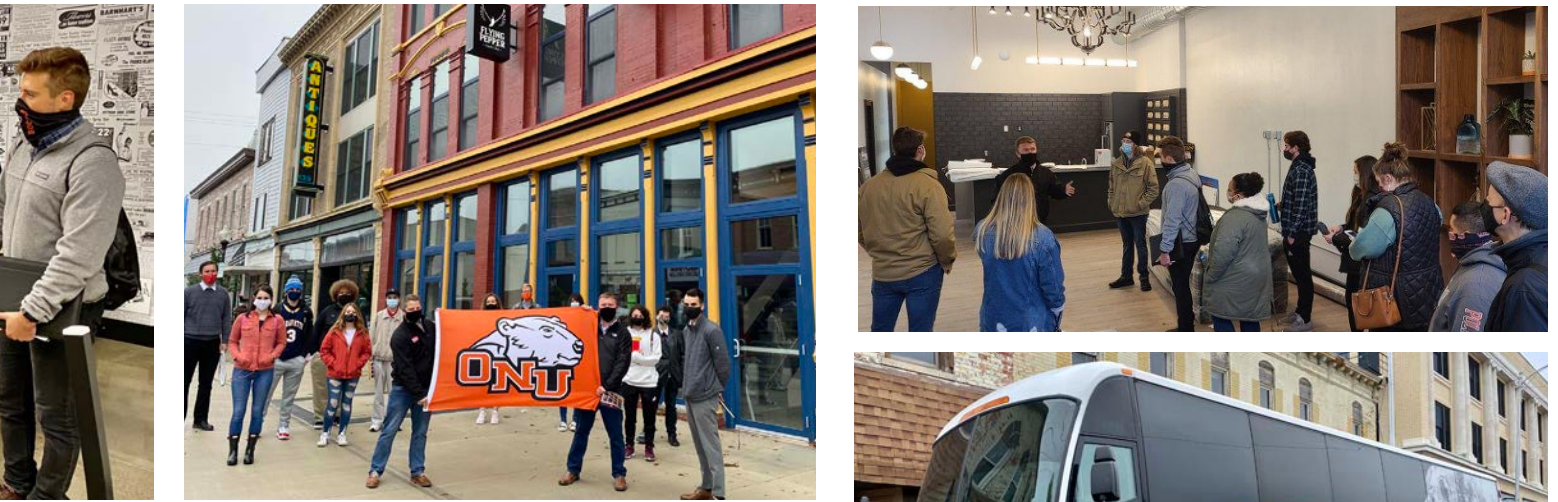
the public interacts with historical pieces in a museum or academic setting, we believe historical buildings within a downtown district are palaces of innovation that live and breathe in the present as reference points to the past successes and failures of business ventures and ideas.

"I brought my students to Bellefontaine because I wanted them to see the revitalization of a historic town center," said Dr. David Strittmatter, Assistant Professor of History at Ohio Northern University. "Small towns escaped urban renewal and, as a result, they still have some great old buildings. That architecture just seems to be appreciated more in Bellefontaine than in other small towns."

A deeper relationship is being built within the James F. Dicke College of Business, as well. Dean John Navin and Dr. Jaume Franquesa approached our team with a unique proposition – senior students in the Business Capstone program were interested in working with Small Nation and helping us solve a problem we're seeing in small towns we have been working with. Clearly, the restaurant industry has been uniquely challenged during the Covid pandemic. We challenged students to investigate what model restaurants are best suited for rural small towns, practices that have increased customer safety and business revenue, and deviations from their metro-area counterparts. The response has been overwhelming – five senior teams have requested to be a part of the project, nearly thirty students and faculty advisors in all.

{Navin/Franquesa quote}





The student groups will be spending all of the 2020-2021 academic year investigating the problem statement we set out for them to research, working with restaurants in downtown Bellefontaine to learn policies and procedures, challenges through Covid, and new safety techniques implemented to help boost consumer confidence during the pandemic. Research is ongoing now, and findings will be presented to the Small Nation team in the spring of 2021. This research will help Small Nation as well look to help other small towns across the country, looking to build back their business capacity in their downtowns and historic districts.

Small Nation's engagement with higher education is slated to produce real results that inspire students to see what makes small towns so ripe for opportunity and growth, perform real, on-the-ground research in forgotten and underrated communities across the nation, and spark a rebirth of investment in the courthouse communities we work in every day. That is what makes the work Small Nation does so important.





## The home décor shop is cozy and comfortable, eclectic and inviting. Kind of country ... but cooler

**S**tep into Just U'NeeQ in downtown Bellefontaine and you'll discover a warm and welcoming space with a charming farmhouse flair. The home décor shop is cozy and comfortable, eclectic and inviting. Kind of country ... but cooler.



The aptly named shop is indeed unique. It offers everything from handcrafted wooden "welcome" posts to whimsical artwork of flower-bedecked farm animals. Covering the shelves and walls are scores of handcrafted clocks, baskets and boxes, cheery signs, candles, wreaths and greenery, and so much more.

But this farm-themed shop moves beyond the usual muted color palettes and rooster-and-egg signs. Instead, explains owner Tiffany Rockhold, "It's a mixture of Boho-chic and industrial farmhouse styles."

Tiffany and husband Darrin opened the shop smack-dab in downtown Bellefontaine in fall 2018. They had been doing craft fairs and flea markets for a few years, and quickly outgrew a small space they'd rented earlier in town. For an awkward period when they lacked a permanent space, they even operated out of a storage unit.

Then the Small Nation team stepped in.

"One day Jason (Duff) told me he had the perfect downtown building for us to be in," Tiffany says. "The space was huge; I was scared to death. But my philosophy is, if it's meant to be, it will be. When Jason called back and said the space was all ours, I got goosebumps!"

With Small Nation's encouragement and guidance, the couple got right to work to design their dream shop, prepping to open just a few months later. Using social media, they promoted the grand opening ... and were amazed at the response. "There were 150 people in line waiting for the doors to open," she says.

Tiffany – who also holds down a full-time job in purchasing at the local hospital – and Darrin say they originally got into the business on a whim. "We were sitting around one day and she said she wanted to do a craft show. I made her some wooden things and she made wreaths," Darrin remembers, "and boom, everything sold fast. We thought, wow, this is something we could really do together!"

Fast forward to today, and the couple's business is better than ever. Sales at the shop consistently top records. And happy customers come by to browse and buy, coming from Bellefontaine and towns all over Ohio.



To meet demand, the Rockholds also operate a separate manufacturing division – called JunQ & Co. – that produces more farmhouse-style items than the two could possibly craft by hand themselves. The 3,000 square-foot facility on the outskirts of town is manned by the couple and their four grown children plus their significant others. This production crew can churn out up to 3,600 items a month – from their popular wooden signs, clocks and grow-charts to farmhouse tables and custom cabinets.

JunQ stocks goods not only for Just U’NeeQ but also to sell wholesale to independent shops throughout Ohio, the Midwest and Northeast. The couple participates in massive vendor fairs too, where they market goods to other vendors ... and find unique offerings to showcase at their own shop.



Downtown Bellefontaine has proved to be a gem as a location, Tiffany says. “The support from the community has been wonderful. People want to buy local; I try not to overlap with what other stores stock and I’m always inspired by what my customers say they’re looking for.

“The downtown vibe here in Bellefontaine is fabulous. The Small Nation team said this is going to be the place to be. And they were right.”



“This year, Just U’NeeQ is also launching a standalone holiday store on West Columbus, the “Just U’NeeQ Holiday Shop,” featuring homemade holiday décor and signs, gorgeously curated Christmas trees for your home, a Christmas floral bar for the perfect centerpiece for your holiday meals, specialized gifts for those hard-to-buy-for friends on your list, grab & go hot chocolate packs, and much more.



“We’re so excited to bring an old-fashioned, magical farmhouse Christmas to all of our customers,” said owner Tiffany Rockhold. “During the holidays, our downtown feels like it is right out of a Hallmark Christmas movie, and we’re here to help our customers make their homes feel like that too.”

Santa will be visiting the Holiday Shop on select dates (check their Facebook page for dates), children can drop off their letters for Santa, and the Shop will also have live acoustic holiday music by local artists on select weekends.”



# Wagler Badenhop: Helping Businesses Weather the COVID Storm

**Small-town love. Farm-bred beliefs. And a keen sense of what makes a business work ... even in the worst of times.**

Those are some of the key values that Eli Wagler and Jacob Badenhop have relied on to help small business owners in Bellefontaine weather the COVID-19 storm.



The two long-time friends and colleagues own Wagler Badenhop, a professional services firm that traditionally has focused on accounting and tax services, and industry expertise for agriculture and small-town businesses.

"Our 'why' has always been the love of helping small businesses grow because they

drive the town," explained Eli. "When small businesses succeed, towns succeed, too."

But this year has been a bit different. Last spring, the two – with offices in Bellefontaine, Richwood and Upper Sandusky – were just breathing a sigh of relief as they wrapped up the busy tax season. "Then COVID hit," said

Jacob, "and our business owners were scared. They were asking, what do we do? How do we adapt to this? We had to help them figure it out ... and fast."

So the two met with Small Nation's team to set priorities and figure out where their skills would pack the biggest punch in assisting Bellefontaine's small business and restaurant owners through the chaos.

Business owners like Iron City Sports Bar's Matt Brown. "When COVID hit, we knew we had to get on board. It forced us to adapt and pivot to a new reality in the restaurant business," he said. "Right away we consulted with Eli and Jacob to set priorities and make

changes."

Wagler Badenhop helped Brown take a hard look at his relatively new restaurant, and make the difficult – but ultimately wise – decision to temporarily close in order to regroup. They also jumped in to help him apply for federal loans that would help keep his restaurant afloat.

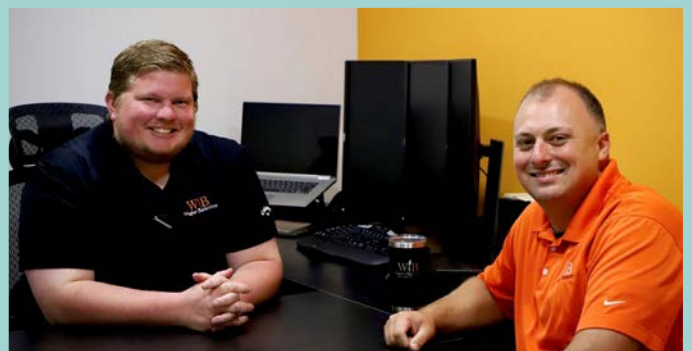


"We helped him, and other business owners understand and navigate the SBA (Small Business Administration) loan systems and processing for PPP and EIDL loans," explained Eli. "Things were changing by the day and there was a lot of misinformation. Helping business owners navigate the resources was important."

Best of all, Wagler Badenhop offered crucial guidance to their small business clients at no charge. "That's the farmers in us. If your neighbor needs help, you help," said Jacob, who grew up on a farm and still runs a 2,500-acre row-crop farm. "We wanted to take the burden off our clients so they could concentrate on getting back to doing business the best way possible."

For Brown, that was a blessing and a relief. "My skill set is in operations. The loan paperwork and applying through local lenders were outside my realm of experience," he said.

With Wagler Badenhop's guidance, Brown was able to secure the loans. And while the restaurant was closed for a few weeks, he put a whole slew of fresh processes in place, equipping Iron City with a new division



dedicated to carry-out and delivery. Examining HR and payroll processes. And making sure everything was done with current regulations in place to protect both employees and customers.

"We had not been offering carry out or delivery. Who would have ever thought that ordering a burger or steak to be delivered would catch on?" he said. But it did, and continues to be a "strong arm" of his business. With Wagler Badenhop's help and ongoing community support, Brown has been able to sustain – and even grow -- his business.

"COVID forced us to change," Brown said. "By May, we were able to offer everyone their jobs back, and actually hired for new positions because we've been able to grow. And with Eli and Jacob's help, we are now prepared to sustain another blow if we ever have to.

"Today, our business is stronger than ever."



# Three New Businesses Calling West Columbus Avenue Home This Fall



The transformation is underway and soon this block of three storefronts will be home to three new businesses in downtown Bellefontaine.

The trio of storefronts located at 117, 121 and 123 West Columbus Avenue was owned by Bill and Carole Barrett for many years. Small Nation purchased these over the summer and started renovations which will include a fun, healthy, smoothie bar; a full-service salon; and a real estate agency office. On the second floor there will be two newly renovated loft apartments that will be available Spring 2021.

In the storefront located at 117 West Columbus, Sammie Ropp and Melanie Hancock are opening Hi-Point Nutrition, a smoothie bar, by November 1st, 2020. Sammie owns and operates Downtown Nutrition as well, which is located in downtown Urbana and has been in business for 5 years.

Hi-Point Nutrition is much more than a smoothie bar, however. They will offer energizing teas with 3 different levels of caffeine to customize your energy needs. There are multiple delicious flavors to choose







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[See less](#)

#### Top 10 Diners' Choice Winners



##### Six Hundred Downtown

★★★★★ 194

Italian

Bellefontaine

Seating: bar, highTop, outdoor

7:15 PM

7:30 PM

Takeout

(937) 599-6600

Booked 20 times today

\$30 & under



##### Speck Italian Eatery

★★★★★ 214

Contemporary Italian

Delaware

9:00 PM

9:30 PM

Takeout

(740) 417-4074

Booked 4 times today

\$30 & under



##### Jeff Ruby's Steakhouse - Columbus

★★★★★ 1,941

Steakhouse

\$31 to \$50

Who is the #1 Best Overall Open Table restaurant in the Columbus, Ohio market It happens to be in Bellefontaine. Nice work Brittany Saxton and the Six Hundred Downtown team.



Looking good Zeb Wagner! Thanks for being a great attorney and leader in our community.

# Office Notes

## MAIN STREET MARKETING NEWS

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They also offer healthy shakes packed full of vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants and protein, the perfect meal replacement for anyone on the move. A few of their most popular flavors of shakes include Banana Muffin, Orange Cream, Chocolate Covered Banana, Reese's, and White Chocolate Raspberry.

The space itself will showcase a new custom built 25 foot long bar where patrons can order and pull up a seat and enjoy while they work on their laptop, or engage with friends. Restored tin ceilings painted a glossy white with beautiful pendant lights throughout the space give it an elegant look and feel.

You can learn more about Hi-Point Nutrition by following them on Facebook and Instagram, and be sure to visit them when they open in November at 117 West Columbus Avenue.

Next door, Brandi Salyer purchased Hairloom Aetlier from Micki Wall and has rebranded the business for her new full-service salon – Undertone Beauty Bar.

She is working with Small Nation on plans for a full remodel of the salon this winter, which will open up two more booths available for leasing. Her staff includes Darcy Tontonoz and Lauren Huffman, both are licensed cosmetologists, and are also in the process of obtaining their certification for eye lash extensions.

Additional future services such as Brazilian Blowouts, Balayage, color and color corrections, haircuts, styling, body waxing, hair extensions, manicure, Gel X, and pedicures are also coming with the new planned renovations.





Renovations will include new wax room, expanded dispensary room, additional retail shelving and more. Brandi is excited to be involved with the downtown and upcoming downtown events. You can learn more about Undertone Beauty Bar by finding them on Facebook and Instagram. Their address is 121 West Columbus Avenue.



Last, but certainly not least, a complete renovation of the former Band Aid Shoppe office space previously owned and operated by Bill Barrett who recently retired and sold the building to Small Nation. This renovation will include two new offices, a conference room, break room, and lobby. This new office space will be home to long standing real estate agency Choice Properties.

Choice Properties has been in business for 21 years here in Logan County, and they've had a Bellefontaine office for the past 10 years but are relocating to this soon to be newly renovated space at 123 West Columbus Avenue.

Broker and Owner Teri Frymyer is excited to be located on Columbus Avenue, sharing that Choice Properties is looking forward to participating in downtown events and being part of the growing energy along West Columbus Avenue and her new neighbors.

Agents Jennifer Simpson, Jim Macaluso, and Kris Suerdick are looking forward to utilizing the soon to be new office for appointments with clients, future closings, and having a storefront windows that can be used for promoting available residential and commercial listings.

You can follow Choice Properties online at Facebook and LinkedIn!



Small Nation is also drafting plans for remodeling the 2nd floor of this three storefront building to include two new 2-bedroom loft apartments that will be available in Spring 2021 for lease. These loft apartments will include all new flooring, ceilings, LED lighting, modern finishes, and open kitchens. All stainless steel appliances will be included, and there will be common laundry available for tenants to utilize.

If you're interested in being added to the waiting list for information on these loft apartments please visit the Small Nation website at [www.smallnationstrong.com](http://www.smallnationstrong.com).

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