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**SMALL** NATION





**Q2 2025 MAIN STREET QUARTERLY REPORT SMALLNATIONSTRONG.COM 937-565-4580** 

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#### A LETTER FROM JASON

As we move into summer, I always find this season brings with it a renewed sense of momentum and possibility. especially for small towns. Streets are filling up again, patios are opening, and foot traffic is picking up. For small business owners, this is one of the best times of the year to capture attention. grow revenue, and build stronger relationships in your community.

At Small Nation, we've seen firsthand how the energy of summer can be a turning point for businesses. Warmer weather means more festivals, more outdoor dining, more travelers passing through - and ultimately more chances to connect. But taking full advantage of this season doesn't happen by accident. It takes intention, creativity, and a little bit of planning.

If you're a small business owner or building owner, this is the time to lean in. Start by refreshing your storefront or sidewalk space. Add a pop of color, a seasonal display, or outdoor seating. Make sure your signage is easy to read, your hours are updated online, and your windows tell a story about what's inside. First impressions still matter, especially when more people are out and about, deciding where to spend their time

It's also a good time to revisit your marketing. Seasonal promotions, summer-themed events, and local collaborations can all drive new traffic. One simple idea we've seen work well? Partner with a neighboring business to create a shared summer offer or event.

When businesses support each other, the whole downtown benefits.

Looking ahead, we're continuing to expand our work with small towns across the country. Over the past several months, our team has visited communities like Jackson Center, East Palestine, and Circleville, helping local leaders activate real estate, spark entrepreneurship, and identify paths to sustainable growth. In every town we visit, one thing remains true: strong local businesses are the foundation of economic revitalization.

We're also keeping a close eye on a few big picture trends. First, more young people are choosing small towns to live and launch businesses. Affordability, flexibility, and quality of life are shifting where talent wants to go, and communities that invest in places are seeing the benefits. Second, we're seeing increasing interest in destination retail, where stores aren't just about shopping, they're about experience. If you've built a business that tells a story and makes people feel something, you're already ahead.

Let's make this summer count. Whether you're activating a storefront, renovating a property, or working behind the scenes to move your town forward, we see you, and we're with you.

#### **WHAT'S INSIDE?**

- **Letter from Jason Duff**
- **The Luminary Space Opens in Uptown Marysville, Ohio**
- **New Pop-Up Retail** Concept "Proof." to Launch in Downtown Bellefontaine
- **National Youth Advocate Program Opens New Office** in Downtown Bellefontaine
- **Small Nation Reflects on First-Ever IEDC Rural Retreat** in Great Falls, Montana
- **Wild Mushroom Tattoos Now Open in Rainbow Row Bellefontaine**
- **Billboard Spotlight: Farmer's** quipment - Lakeview
- **Small Nation Welcomes Brianna Lewis as Assistant Community Manager of Build Marysville**
- **New Furniture Refurbishing Gallery Opens in Downtown** Bellefontaine
- **Jason Duff Keynotes NYSCMA** Annual Conference in Cooperstown, New York
- **Featured Property:** 118 W. Chillicothe Ave. **Rainbow Row Bellefontaine**
- **Third Downtown Bellefontaine Spring Cleaning Mark Another Earth Day Success**
- **Small Nation Podcast: Season 2 Highlights**



## THE LUMINARY EVENT SPACE OPENS IN UPTOWN MARYSVILLE, OHIO







A long-awaited addition to Uptown Marysville's event scene has arrived with the opening of the Luminary Event Space, a premier venue designed for memorable gatherings and celebrations. Located at 129 N. Main Street, the Luminary is situated in the lower level of BUILD Cowork + Space Marysville, accommodating a wide range of events.

For decades, the Lamplighter Inn & Restaurant served as a beloved gathering place for Marysville residents. Established by the Rockenbaugh family, the restaurant reopened in 1984 and became well known for its welcoming atmosphere and signature pies before closing in 1991. In the years that followed, the space housed the Marysville Entrepreneurship Center (MEC), a space for small business development. Today, that spirit of hospitality and entrepreneurship continues with BUILD Cowork + Space and the Luminary, an event space designed to bring people together in a fresh, modern setting.

"The opening of The Luminary Event Space represents a significant milestone in the development of Uptown Marysville," said Jason Duff, Founder & CEO of Small Nation. "By honoring the legacy of the Lamplighter, we are creating a dynamic space that meets the growing demand for event venues and catering services in our community."

The Luminary Event Space is fully equipped with modern amenities to enhance any gathering. It features a high-quality SONOs Commercial Sound System, Bluetooth-enabled technology, smart TVs - including four 60-inch televisions - and virtual conferencing equipment to support both in-person and hybrid events.

For those requiring catering, the Luminary provides a dedicated catering kitchen equipped with a three-compartment sink, handwash sink, ice machine, refrigerator, two hot boxes, a stainless-steel prep table, and large commercial trash cans. This allows caterers and event hosts to prepare and serve food efficiently.

The event space offers a flexible layout with a variety of table and chair setups, including round tables, classroom seating, and presentation configurations. Additionally, a bar area with barstools, a cozy booth seating nook, and Nest lounge chairs provide comfortable options for guests to enjoy. Accessibility has been carefully considered, with both front and back entrances available, including a chair lift at the back entrance for guests who require additional mobility support. Two public restrooms are also located on-site for convenience.

"We recognized the need for a versatile event space in Uptown Marysville,

and the Luminary fulfills that need beautifully," added Bo Alexander, BUILD Community Manager. "Our venue is designed to accommodate a wide range of events, from weddings and corporate meetings to private parties and workshops. We are excited to welcome guests and help them create memorable experiences."

To ensure a seamless experience, on-site staff is available to assist with event planning and execution. Whether it's a corporate seminar, wedding reception, or networking event, the Luminary provides dedicated support to help hosts bring their vision to life.

Located in the lower level of BUILD Marysville, The Luminary offers easy access to ample parking and nearby accommodations. The venue is within walking distance of several popular dining and entertainment spots, including Leon's Garage, Coffee Hall & Creamery, the Old Town Marketplace, and more.

The Luminary Event Space is now accepting bookings. To inquire about hosting an event or to schedule a tour, please visit

www.luminaryeventspace.com or contact info@luminaryeventspace.com.

### NEW POP-UP RETAIL CONCEPT "PROOF." TO LAUNCH IN DOWNTOWN BELLEFONTAINE

A new concept aimed at supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses will open its doors soon in Downtown Bellefontaine. Proof. is a modern popup shop space located at Rainbow Row Bellefontaine, offering short-term, movein-ready retail opportunities for makers, artists, startups, contractors, and brands.

A project of Small Nation, Proof. was created to offer a more accessible path for aspiring business owners to bring their ideas to life without taking on the long-term financial risks of traditional leases. With flexible lease terms of one, two, or three months and a fully equipped storefront, Proof. provides a simple, low-barrier way for entrepreneurs to connect with customers and test their products in a high-visibility location.

"Traditional long-term leases can be intimidating, especially when you're just starting out," said Brianna Lewis, Proof. Manager for Small Nation. "We created this space to be a launchpad. Whether you're a baker, an artist, or an aspiring boutique operator, this is a chance to take your idea and put it in front of real customers, right now."

Located in one of Downtown
Bellefontaine's busiest and most visible
areas, Proof. is within walking distance
of large, free, city parking lots. Nearby
businesses include the Craft Emporium,
Wild Mushroom Tattoos, and the Flats at
Rainbow Row.

Proof. is fully furnished and includes utilities, Wi-Fi, and a welcome feature on social media for every tenant.

Tenants will be able to utilize multiple retail display fixtures, customizable layouts, two large TVs, and a large selfie wall, all to help the business be a success. The storefront also offers an optional marketing package which includes professional photos, a custom press release, and training resources designed to help businesses build visibility and attract customers during their time in the space.

Proof. is already seeing interest from a range of creators, from photographers preparing for senior photo season to product-based brands testing seasonal items or specialty services.

The goal, according to Brianna, is long-term impact. "We hope this space becomes a reliable steppingstone for entrepreneurs to gain confidence, grow their brand, and maybe even establish a permanent presence downtown," she said.

Proof. is located at 116 W. Chillicothe Ave. The first business will be opening soon. For updates, follow along at facebook.com/proofpopup. Interested businesses can learn more and apply for a lease at **www.itsproof.com**.









### NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM OPENS NEW OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN BELLEFONTAINE

The National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP), a leading nonprofit provider of community-based services for children, youth, and families, opened a new office at 123 W Columbus Ave in Downtown Bellefontaine.

NYAP's presence in Logan County is not new, but this dedicated location will give the organization greater visibility and accessibility in the heart of Bellefontaine's business district. From this space, the organization will continue providing services including foster care, behavioral health, intensive home-based therapy, and OhioRISE care coordination.

"NYAP is an energetic instrument of compassion and change in the lives of children, youth, and families, and the systems, structures, and practices that affect them," said Danielle Greiner, CME Director of National Youth Advocate

Program. "This new location gives us a central space to better connect with the families we serve and with our community partners across Logan County."

NYAP currently operates more than 75 programs across 16 states, all accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). The new Bellefontaine office strengthens their statewide reach in Ohio and demonstrates a long-term investment in supporting children and families in this region. The site offers NYAP a modern, welcoming space with proximity to other nonprofits, government services, and professional offices.

"We're excited to welcome NYAP to our downtown," said Keyne Strickland, Leasing and Property Manager at Small Nation. "This team has been doing meaningful work in the region for years, and having a physical location in the center of town will only help increase their visibility and impact. We're proud to have them here."

Looking ahead, NYAP plans to use the new location as a center for community collaboration. They are exploring partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders to expand services and respond to local needs.

The office officially opened on June 30, 2025, with a ribbon cutting celebration on July 1. For more information about NYAP, visit www.nyap.org, follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/NYAP.INC, or connect on LinkedIn at

linkedin.com/company/nyap\_inc. The team can also be reached by phone at 877-NYAP-CAN or by email at info@nyap.org.









# SMALL NATION REFLECTS ON FIRST-EVER IEDC RURAL RETREAT IN GREAT FALLS, MONTANA



Small Nation Founder & CEO Jason
Duff and team member Ann Donnelly
recently returned from Great Falls,
Montana, where they participated in the
International Economic Development
Council's inaugural Rural Retreat: Rural
Recharged. The event brought together
more than 400 rural and tribal economic
development leaders from across the
country for three days of collaboration,
discussion, and shared learning.

The retreat offered a unique opportunity for cross-sector exchange on pressing issues facing rural America - including housing, entrepreneurship, workforce development, childcare, and downtown revitalization. Sessions were designed by rural leaders, for rural leaders, and included voices from a range of industries and communities.

Jason Duff took the Main Stage as part of a featured panel discussion on how to bring ideas and inspiration from national events back into local practice. He was joined by Jonathan Stone of Main Street America and Marci Goodwin of SmartStart Business Development. Together, they shared insights on translating vision into action and how to adapt national best practices to local realities.

"This was more than just a conference
- it was a gathering of people who are
passionate about fixing old buildings,
growing entrepreneurial ecosystems,
and creating new opportunities in
small towns," said Duff. "We made
new connections, learned from some
incredible leaders, and came home with
fresh ideas and renewed energy."

Great Falls, often called the Electric City, served as a powerful backdrop for the retreat. The city's downtown features more than 60 public murals, with more added each year as part of their revitalization efforts. The Small Nation team was especially inspired by how Great Falls has used art, local leadership, and public-private partnerships to drive progress in its community.





#### WILD MUSHROOM TATTOOS NOW OPEN IN RAINBOW ROW BELLEFONTAINE

Wild Mushroom Tattoos, a female-owned and operated tattoo studio, opened its doors at 114 W. Chillicothe Ave. in Rainbow Row Bellefontaine on February 28, 2025. The new studio marks an expansion for the business, which was originally established in Urbana in 2022.

Wild Mushroom Tattoos is owned by Lauren Rutschilling-Smiddy, an artist with a background in fine arts from Wittenberg University. After completing an apprenticeship in Dayton and gaining experience at various shops and tattoo conventions, she decided to open her own studio. The move to Bellefontaine comes as part of a natural progression, as demand for her work has outgrown her former location.

"I've loved my time in Urbana, but when an opening at Rainbow Row Bellefontaine became available, I jumped at the opportunity to upgrade my business," said Lauren. "This space allows me to continue growing and serving more clients in a new, welcoming environment."

What sets Wild Mushroom Tattoos apart is the versatility of its artistry. Unlike many studios that focus on a single tattooing style. Wild Mushroom Tattoos offers a wide range of designs, including American traditional, neotraditional,

illustrative realism, fine line, watercolor, black and grey, and full-color pieces.

"Tattooing is my passion, and I love working in different styles to bring my clients' ideas to life," Lauren added.

"We are excited to welcome Wild Mushroom Tattoos to Rainbow Row." said Kevne Strickland, Small Nation Leasing and Property Manager. "Lauren brings a unique and artistic energy to the downtown, adding to the growing mix of creative entrepreneurs choosing

Bellefontaine as their home."

Wild Mushroom Tattoos celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon cutting on Friday, February 28, and plans to participate in future Bellefontaine events, including holding flash and walk-in appointment days during special events downtown.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit

www.wildmushroomtattoos.com or text 833-374-5103.



#### **BILLBOARD SPOTLIGHT: FARMERS EQUIPMENT - LAKEVIEW:** TRUSTED EQUIPMENT, EXPANDING REACH

Since 2007, Farmers Equipment in Lakeview, Ohio, has built a reputation for delivering high-quality farm equipment, parts, and service with a personal touch. As a full-line Case IH and Kubota dealership, they serve the agricultural needs of Logan County and the surrounding region, helping local producers stay productive and profitable vear-round.

To strengthen their connection with the community and expand awareness of their offerings, Farmers Equipment has partnered with COMSTOR Outdoor to advertise their Kubota equipment line on get the job done.

eye-catching billboards in both Logan and Champaign counties. These highvisibility displays showcase the power and versatility of Kubota equipment - reinforcing Farmers Equipment's commitment to serving farmers, builders, and landowners with reliable machinery and trusted support.

The billboards, like the one prominently featured along US-33, highlight the message: "Built to build your reputation." With vivid imagery of hardworking equipment in action, they serve as a bold reminder of where to find the tools to

Conveniently located at 13833 US-33 in Lakeview, Farmers Equipment continues to grow while staying true to its local roots. Stop by the showroom or explore their full inventory online at farmerseq.com or call (419) 568-4392.



#### **SMALL NATION WELCOMES BRIANNA LEWIS AS ASSISTANT COMMUNITY MANAGER OF BUILD MARYSVILLE**

Small Nation recently welcomed Brianna Lewis as Assistant Community Manager of BUILD Cowork + Space Marvsville. Brianna joined the team on March 3rd and brings a strong background in customer service, sales, and community engagement to her new role. In this role, Brianna will also serve as Event Coordinator for the Luminary Event Space, a premier event venue opening soon within BUILD Marysville.

Brianna will play a key role in ensuring a welcoming, collaborative environment for BUILD Marysville's members and guests at the Luminary. She will oversee event planning and execution, partner and vendor relations, community engagement initiatives, and operational support to enhance the coworking and event experiences.

Brianna's professional background includes earning both her Ohio Real Estate and Insurance Licenses, giving her a comprehensive understanding of customer relations and business operations. She has also worked in various restaurant settings, from local eateries to upscale dining establishments, and runs her own home baking business, HoneyBree Sweets. Through these roles and positions, she gained valuable experience in customer service, sales strategy, market trends, and community engagement that she brings to the Small Nation team.

"I'm excited to be part of BUILD Marysville and help create a welcoming space where people can connect and thrive." Brianna said. "I also can't wait to bring the Luminary to life and be involved in the amazing events and opportunities ahead!"

An Indian Lake native, Brianna has been actively involved in community initiatives, previously serving as a member of local chambers and contributing to different events. She is eager to deepen her involvement with the Marysville and Union County communities, particularly through

uptown business groups, events like FestiFair, and more.

"We are thrilled to have Brianna join our team as we continue to grow BUILD Cowork + Space Marysville and introduce The Luminary as a unique event destination," said Bo Alexander, BUILD Cowork + Space Community Manager. "Her passion for connecting with people, organizing events, and creating an exceptional community experience will be a tremendous asset."

Brianna currently resides in Bellefontaine with her husband, Braden, and their 12-year-old labrador, Benji

BUILD Cowork + Space is a collaborative work community designed to inspire, connect, and enable small businesses and solopreneurs in small towns. BUILD Marysville features almost 4,000 square feet of coworking space in the former Lamplighter Building, With the recent launch of the Luminary, the space will also serve as a go-to venue for private and corporate events, workshops, networking opportunities, and community gatherings.

For more information about BUILD Cowork + Space Marysville membership and event venue options, please visit www.buildcowork.com/marysville or follow us on social media at www.facebook.com/buildmarysville.



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**COWORK + SPACE** 

MARYSVILLE

129 N Main Street Marysville, OH 43040

937-589-2600 INFO@BUILDCOWORK.COM

### NEW FURNITURE REFURBISHING GALLERY OPENS IN DOWNTOWN BELLEFONTAINE





The Refurbishing Gallery, a new home for high-quality refurbished furniture and custom restoration services, is now open at 301 W Columbus Ave in Downtown Bellefontaine. Owner Drew Nye celebrated the grand opening on Monday, March 17th, bringing a fresh and unique shopping experience to the community.

The Refurbishing Gallery specializes in refurbished furniture, unfinished pieces ready for customization, and full-service furniture restoration. Unlike many in the industry who operate solely online, Nye saw the value in having a physical storefront where customers can see, feel, and experience the transformations up close.

"I've always had an interest in buying and selling unique pieces," said Drew Nye, owner of The Refurbishing Gallery. "Once I started working with furniture, I realized how much I loved the process of taking something old and giving it new life. I wanted to create a space where people could see that transformation for themselves - not

just in photos, but in person."

The store offers a wide selection of ready-to-purchase refurbished furniture, pieces available for custom refinishing, and a range of repair and restoration services. Whether it's a small fix or a complete furniture overhaul, customers can bring in their own pieces for customization to match their style and décor. The Refurbishing Gallery also provides pick-up and delivery services, making the process even easier for customers.

"Having a business like the Refurbishing Gallery in Downtown Bellefontaine adds to the diverse and growing retail scene we've cultivated," said Keyne Strickland, Leasing and Property Manager for Small Nation. "Drew's ability to take furniture and transform it into something unique, stylish, and custom-tailored to each customer is a great fit for the downtown."

For more information, visit the Refurbishing Gallery on Facebook at facebook.com/TheRefurbishingGallery or call 937-441-0381.

### JASON DUFF KEYNOTES NYSCMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK

Jason Duff, Founder and CEO of Small Nation, served as the keynote speaker at the New York State City/County Management Association (NYSCMA) Annual Conference, which took place April 30 through May 2 at the Otesaga Resort Hotel in Cooperstown, New York. The keynote was on Thursday, May 1.

The NYSCMA is a professional association of appointed municipal executives and administrators across New York, committed to improving the effectiveness of local government through training, information exchange, and promotion of the council-manager form of government. The organization's annual spring conference brings together city and county leaders for three days of professional development, networking, and discussion on best practices in public administration.

Jason shared insights from his work leading Small Nation, a real estate and economic development company focused on revitalizing small towns through entrepreneurship, property investment, and strategic partnerships. His keynote highlighted practical examples of downtown transformation, including how creative leasing, building reuse, and local business development can strengthen rural economies and municipal budgets.

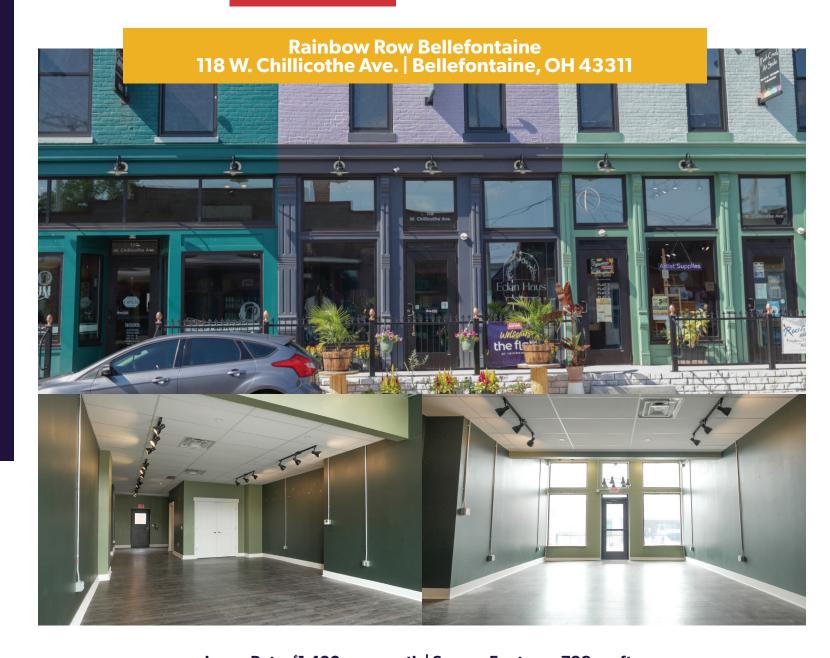
"Across the country, including in both Ohio and New York, small towns are facing real challenges - but also real opportunities," said Jason. "I'm honored to have spoken with New York's city and county leaders about how intentional investment and innovative partnerships can breathe new life into main streets, strengthen communities, and deliver measurable results."

The 2025 NYSCMA program also featured national voices on digital communications and AI in government, along with sessions on council/manager collaboration and service delivery improvements. The event offered municipal professionals a chance to learn, network, and explore historic Cooperstown.



# SMALL NATION.

### FEATURED PROPERTY



Lease Rate: \$1,400 per month | Square Footage: 798 sq. ft.
Tenant is responsible for gas, electric, internet and snow removal in front of space and sidewalks.

Welcome to 118 W. Chillicothe, nestled in one of the oldest and most charming buildings in Historic Downtown Bellefontaine. Recently renovated in 2022-2023, this property seamlessly combines historical elegance with modern amenities, making it a highly desirable commercial space. This unique property offers a rare opportunity to become part of the thriving and historic Downtown Bellefontaine community.

#### **CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION**

937.565.4580 | SMALLNATION.COM/AVAILABLE-PROPERTIES/

#### THIRD DOWNTOWN BELLEFONTAINE SPRING **CLEANING MARKS ANOTHER EARTH DAY SUCCESS**

Volunteers gathered downtown on Tuesday, April 22, to take part in the third Downtown Bellefontaine Spring Cleaning, held in celebration of Earth Day. The event was a coordinated effort between Small Nation, the City of Bellefontaine, and the Downtown Bellefontaine Partnership, bringing together residents, businesses, and community partners to enhance and maintain public spaces throughout the heart of the city.

This year's projects included trash pickup along sidewalks and alleys, painting over graffiti, laying fresh mulch around green spaces, and prepping downtown planters for spring flowers. Additional efforts were made to improve cleanliness

and appearance around key gathering spots and storefronts. The group ended the cleanup with lunch provided by Six Hundred Downtown and Brewfontaine.

"The momentum around this event continues to grow each year," said Keyne Strickland of Small Nation. "When businesses, volunteers, and city staff come together like this, it shows just how much pride the Bellefontaine community has in our downtown. These small improvements make a big difference."

City officials also expressed appreciation for the collaborative spirit of the cleanup. Wes Dodds, Service-Safety Director for the City of Bellefontaine, added, "Our downtown is a vital part of the city, and keeping it clean and welcoming is a

priority. Events like this not only improve the appearance of our streets but also reinforce the sense of ownership people feel about this place."

Organizers extend their sincere thanks to this year's event sponsors and supporters: Hi-Point Graphics, Brewfontaine, Six Hundred Downtown, Logan County Visitors Bureau, Easton Water Solutions, Logan County Solid Waste District, Republic Services, Honestly Clean, and the Logan County Chamber of Commerce.

For more information about downtown events or to get involved in future volunteer opportunities, visit

www.downtownbellefontaine.com.







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11