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Q4 2025 MAIN STREET QUARTERLY REPORT
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MAIN STREET
QUARTERLY REPORT

Q4 2025

A LETTER FROM JASON



As we close out 2025, I'm grateful for a year defined by growth, partnership, and steady progress in Downtown Bellefontaine and in the communities we serve. New businesses, major

redevelopment projects, national speaking engagements, and strong momentum across our region made this one of our most productive years yet.

Downtown Bellefontaine welcomed a diverse group of new businesses, each contributing to the downtown's strength. Wild Mushroom Tattoos, Ink Ritual Tattoos, Meg the Esthi, Glam and Glow Beauty Bar, The Next Chapter Bookstore, Allways Brewin', Wrock Bottom Bar, National Youth Advocate Program, New Age Medical Services, and others opened their doors and added new reasons for people to visit downtown. Each of these owners took a leap, and together they continue to shape Bellefontaine into a growing center for entrepreneurship and small business success.

One of the most exciting additions was the launch of Proof Pop-Up Shop at Rainbow Row Bellefontaine. Proof was designed to lower the barrier to entry for small business owners by offering a move-in-ready, fully furnished retail storefront with flexible short-term leases. With fixtures, utilities, Wi-Fi, and checkout space included, entrepreneurs can focus on testing products, meeting customers, and building their brand. Early tenants have already seen strong foot traffic and community support, and Proof is positioned to become a pipeline for future long-term downtown businesses.

This year also brought new event spaces. BUILD Cowork + Space Marysville opened the Luminary, a full-service event venue equipped for meetings, celebrations, and community gatherings. In Bellefontaine, plans for the Maxwell moved forward as we transformed the historic Grace A.M.E. Church into a modern wedding and events venue while honoring its important heritage. These spaces strengthen local tourism and give communities new places to connect.

Our team was grateful for the opportunity to present at several major conferences, including the New York State City/County Management Association Conference in Cooperstown, the International Economic Development Council Rural Retreat in Great Falls, Marketing Unleashed at Southern Illinois University, and the Ohio Community Development Corporation Association Conference in Dayton. Sharing the Bellefontaine story while learning from other leaders is a meaningful part of our mission.

We were honored to receive recognition this year as well. The Mount Sterling Strategic Plan received the "Make No Little Plans Award" from the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association. Small Nation was also named a finalist for the Excellence in Place-Based Development Award at the Ohio Economic Development Association Annual Summit. Both acknowledgments reflect the dedication of the communities we partner with and the work they put in every day.

Continued on page 5.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 01** Letter from Jason Duff
Continued on page 5
- 02** Small Nation Collaboration
Honored with Statewide
Planning Award in Illinois
- 03** Ohio's Christmas Capital
has Returned!
- 04** Downtown Bellefontaine
Welcomes Four New Locally
Owned Businesses Across
Beauty, Wellness, and Retail
- 06** Billboard Spotlight:
Citizens Federal Savings
and Loan Association
- 06** Local Real Estate
Developer Podcast
- 07** Downtown Bellefontaine
is Now on Tik Tok!
- 08** Duff Keynotes Ohio CDC
Association Annual
Conference in Dayton
- 09** Featured Property:
133-135 S. Main Street
- 10** Small Nation Attends
OEDA Annual Summit,
Recognized as Finalist for
Excellence in Place-Based
Development Award
- 11** Small Nation Podcast:
Season 2 Highlights





SMALL NATION COLLABORATION HONORED WITH STATEWIDE PLANNING AWARD IN ILLINOIS

The City of Mount Sterling’s Long Range Strategic Plan was honored with the “Make No Little Plans Award” at the 2025 Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-IL) Project Awards, presented in October during the APA-IL State Conference in Chicago. The plan was developed by Teska Associates with support from All Together, Chicago-based design studio focused on placemaking, community branding, and engagement, and Small Nation, an Ohio-based real estate development and consulting firm known for its successful small-town revitalization work in Bellefontaine, Ohio.

The Mighty Mount Sterling Strategic Plan was created to address common rural challenges, including housing shortages, limited staff capacity, and economic diversification, while highlighting opportunities for creative, community-led growth. The plan focused on revitalizing Uptown Mount Sterling through infill development, adaptive reuse, code updates, and marketing the city as a destination through storytelling, events, and public art.

During the planning process, Small Nation made multiple visits to Mount Sterling to meet with business owners, civic leaders, and residents. The team provided firsthand insight into small-town revitalization, offering tools and

recommendations that have helped shape new projects and investments now taking place Uptown. “We were honored to bring our small-town experience to this project,” said Jason Duff, Founder and CEO of Small Nation. “Mount Sterling’s leaders and residents showed incredible commitment and creativity. This award reinforces that small towns can set the standard for innovation and impact.”

The award recognizes projects that exemplify visionary planning on a modest budget and serve communities under 10,000 residents. Mount Sterling’s plan stood out for its authenticity, engagement, and clear path toward implementation.

“Working with Jason and the Small Nation team was inspiring,” said Erin Cigliano, Principal at Teska Associates. “They bring entrepreneurial energy, practical know-how, and a deep understanding of what makes small towns thrive.”

Implementation of the plan is already underway. A new bar and grill has opened in Uptown, façade improvements are being rolled out, and a refreshed city brand is being deployed through banners, digital media, and a new Main Street statue.

The Mount Sterling Strategic Plan serves as a model for how small towns can “plan big, act locally, and build a resilient future,” proving that with the right vision and collaboration, even the smallest communities can make no little plans.

This recognition aligns with Small Nation’s mission to help small towns across the country revitalize their downtowns, attract investment, and strengthen their local economies. From Bellefontaine, Ohio, to communities like Dresden, Jackson Center, and Mount Sterling, Small Nation continues to support rural communities in developing actionable strategies that create lasting impact and measurable results.

About the American Planning Association – Illinois Chapter (APA-IL): The American Planning Association – Illinois Chapter (APA-IL) is Illinois’ source for networking and professional development in the field of urban planning. The organization promotes excellence in community planning and recognizes outstanding projects and individuals who are advancing the planning profession throughout the state.

OHIO’S CHRISTMAS CAPITAL HAS RETURNED!



Downtown Bellefontaine is in full holiday mode! Over the last few of weeks, city crews have been busy installing decorations across the Courthouse and light poles, Mistletoe Avenue made a comeback, and storefronts have transitioned their windows, merchandise, and displays to reflect the season. The switch happens fast, but the impact is immediate. With people visiting, taking photos, and beginning their holiday shopping, you can feel the energy building throughout the district.

This transformation is part of a larger effort that began last year when we set out to make Downtown Bellefontaine Ohio’s Christmas Capital. The momentum has been building downtown all year long, and there was an opportunity to create a powerful holiday draw that would support local business owners during the most important sales period of the year. In many communities, small retailers rely on November and December for up to thirty percent of their annual revenue. By building a strong identity around the holiday season, we wanted Bellefontaine to stand out, attract visitors, and deliver real economic value for the people who invest in this city every day.

The strategy centered on placemaking and experience design. Small Nation introduced Mistletoe Avenue as a seasonal companion to Umbrella Avenue. We worked with the City, the Downtown Bellefontaine Partnership, and the Logan County Visitors Bureau to build out displays, light installations, and a cohesive look that made the downtown feel special. We launched a holiday landing page, created a shopping guide, coordinated extended hours with retailers, and helped organize a robust calendar of events. Mayor

David Crissman even formally declared Bellefontaine as Ohio’s Christmas Capital, adding visibility and drawing statewide media attention.

What followed was exactly what we hoped to see. Families returned weekend after weekend. Events filled the calendar. Restaurants stayed busy. Retailers reported strong holiday sales and increased foot traffic, often from visitors who were discovering Bellefontaine for the first time. More importantly, the community embraced the identity. Residents shared photos, tagged businesses, and took pride in being part of the experience. It proved that a small town with a strong vision, steady execution, and committed partners can build a brand that drives economic impact and brings people together.

We’re so excited for this upcoming holiday season and hope you find time to shop and eat local in Downtown Bellefontaine this year. Find a list of everything to do on the Downtown Bellefontaine website at downtownbellefontaine.com/christmas.



DOWNTOWN BELLEFONTAINE WELCOMES FOUR NEW LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES ACROSS BEAUTY, WELLNESS, AND RETAIL



Downtown Bellefontaine continues its steady pace of growth with the opening of four new locally owned businesses offering services and experiences that strengthen the downtown community. Recent additions include Megs the Esthi in the Historic Opera Block, New Age Medical Services and The Next Chapter Bookstore inside the Main Street Marketplace, and Glam & Glow Beauty Bar in Rainbow Row Bellefontaine. Together, these openings reflect Bellefontaine’s ongoing momentum as an appealing place for small business owners to establish and expand their work.

Megs the Esthi: Custom Lash Studio Opens in the Historic Opera Block

Licensed esthetician Meg Patrick has opened Megs the Esthi at 116 E. Court Avenue, bringing a specialized lash and brow studio to the Historic Opera Block. Patrick, an Aveda Institute graduate, first imagined her business during a marketing class years ago. After building a strong client base in the industry, she set out to create a studio that reflects her personal style and a calm, welcoming experience for clients.

Known for her emphasis on lash health and customization, Patrick offers classic, hybrid, and volume lash extensions, along with lash lifts, tints, brow shaping, and brow tinting. Each set is tailored to match the client’s natural lashes and lifestyle. The business also features a small retail section with local self-care products. Patrick says the studio is meant to feel personal. “This isn’t just about lashes, it’s about creating a safe, welcoming space where clients can relax, laugh, and feel like themselves.”

“Meg has built a loyal following through her focus on quality and personal connection,” said Keyne Strickland, Leasing and Property Manager for Small Nation. “Her new studio adds to the diversification and growth of the Historic Opera Block.”

Appointments and service information are available at megstheesthi.glossgenius.com.



New Age Medical Services Expands Healthcare Options in the Main Street Marketplace

Healthcare access received a boost this month with the opening of New Age Medical Services at 130 S. Main Street, Suite 106. Founded by Bellefontaine native and Nurse Practitioner Mackenzie Hurley, the practice began as a mobile urgent care service and has since expanded to offer a broad range of health and wellness options.

Patients can now visit the downtown location for urgent care needs, IV hydration therapy, weight loss management, prenatal services, and wellness screenings. The practice also offers red light therapy, compression therapy, PCR testing, emergency medication kits, supplements, and optional membership plans. A podiatrist will be available on select days, and Hurley plans to continue developing partnerships for specialty and event-based medical services.

Hurley says her goal is simple: removing barriers to healthcare close to home. “We welcome recommendations on what our community would like us to offer,” she said. New Age Medical Services joins other wellness-focused businesses in and around the Marketplace, including Anytime Fitness, A Peaceful Place Massage Company, and Christine Greenwald Counseling.

“Healthcare access is a critical part of every community, and we’re thrilled Mackenzie chose to invest her talent right here in Bellefontaine,” said Strickland. “Her innovative approach strengthens our downtown.”

More information is available at www.newage.clinic.

Glam & Glow Beauty Bar Adds High-End Salon Services to Rainbow Row Bellefontaine

Rainbow Row Bellefontaine has welcomed Glam & Glow Beauty Bar, a full-service salon owned by licensed cosmetologist and local entrepreneur Yaxaira Hisey. Located at 118 W. Chillicothe Avenue, the salon provides a modern, high-end atmosphere with a complete menu of beauty services.



Clients can book haircuts, coloring, styling, nail services, makeup, spray tanning, and facial waxing. Hisey said her vision was to create a space where clients feel their best while receiving professional, detailed service. A curated retail area features salon-quality products for hair, skin, and nail care.

“Glam & Glow adds a modern, upscale touch to Rainbow Row,” said Strickland. “Yaxaira’s focus on quality and experience fits well with the momentum in this part of downtown.”

The salon also plans to host beauty workshops, bridal showcases, and partner events with local businesses and photographers. Appointments can be booked through the business’s Facebook page.

The Next Chapter Bookstore Brings Affordable Reading Options to Downtown

Rounding out the mix of new downtown offerings is The Next Chapter Bookstore, now open inside the Main Street Marketplace at 130 S. Main Street, Suite B103. Founded by Lisa Yoder, the shop specializes in used books across all genres and emphasizes community connection and affordability.

Yoder, a lifelong reader, launched the store after recognizing growing public interest in a local bookstore. The operation is a family effort: her daughter Amanda manages social media and marketing, while her grandson Bryce

handles technology and behind-the-scenes support.

The store features used books, book-themed accessories, and space for readers to browse and explore. Yoder says she hopes to expand into new releases depending on community interest. The bookstore joins other Marketplace tenants including Rustic Boutique, Undertone on Main, Morning Riot, and Decode Zone Escape Room.

“The Main Street Marketplace has become a launchpad for new entrepreneurs,” said Strickland. “Lisa’s vision fills a gap our community has been asking for.”

The store can be reached at 937-407-6565 or TheNextChapterBookstoreOhio@gmail.com.

The openings of Megs the Esthi, New Age Medical Services, Glam & Glow Beauty Bar, and The Next Chapter Bookstore underscore a continued rise in small business development throughout Downtown Bellefontaine. These new ventures, spanning beauty, wellness, and retail, reflect both a supportive entrepreneurial environment and a strong community interest in diverse, local service offerings.

Residents are encouraged to visit each business, explore their services, and continue supporting the entrepreneurs who are shaping the next chapter of Downtown Bellefontaine’s growth.



A Letter From Jason Continued

A major milestone came with the JobsOhio Vibrant Community Grant for the Historic Opera Block. This investment will support the redevelopment of more than seventeen thousand square feet into retail, offices, co-working, and the new Rural Development Education Center. Construction will continue through the next couple of years, and once complete, the project will serve as a cornerstone for Bellefontaine’s next phase of growth.

We also welcomed dozens of groups and hundreds of guests to Downtown Bellefontaine for Small Town Success Insight Visits. These visits continue to inspire leaders from across the country and highlight what collaboration and persistence can achieve.

And finally, we are excited that Ohio’s Christmas Capital has returned, bringing back Mistletoe Avenue, decorated storefronts, and a full season of events. This effort supports our businesses during their most important months and gives families another reason to spend time downtown this holiday season.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Small Nation throughout 2025. Your partnership makes this progress possible. We’re excited to celebrate the holiday season with you and look forward to all that 2026 will bring.

Jason Duff

BILLBOARD SPOTLIGHT: CITIZENS FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

For more than 140 years, Citizens Federal Savings and Loan Association has proudly served Logan County with local lending, savings, and checking solutions that put the community first. We are so lucky to have awesome local community financial institutions like Citizens Federal, who continue to show up, serve, and provide loans and financial products to families and businesses across the region.

In a recent feature with COMSTOR Outdoor, Small Nation's outdoor advertising arm, Citizens Federal shared how our decade-long partnership has helped them reach even more families and customers. From high-visibility billboards across the county to the flexibility of digital billboards that allow instant updates, Citizens Federal has used outdoor advertising as a powerful tool to stay connected. Creative collaborations like student-designed ad campaigns and the reliable, responsive customer service that COMSTOR provides have only strengthened the impact.



Scan the QR to hear from Kyle Brunner, Marketing Director.

Billboards remain one of the most effective ways to reach a wide audience - and for Citizens Federal, they've been key to building lasting community connections.

Learn more about how COMSTOR Outdoor can help your business at comstoroutdoor.com.



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LOCAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER PODCAST

I joined the Local Real Estate Developer Podcast recently with hosts Kristi Kandel and Raphael Collazo to talk about something that's been at the core of my work for nearly two decades: what it really takes to bring a small town back to life. We dug into the early days of Small Nation, back when Bellefontaine's downtown was filled with empty buildings, and the only real plan we had was to take one step forward. What started with one building and a lot of uncertainty turned into a movement that has driven over \$40 million in local reinvestment and created a thriving ecosystem of small businesses.

This conversation was less about theory and more about the reality of small-town development - the sleepless

nights, the failed partnerships, and the lessons learned along the way. We talked about why courage, not capital, is often the first investment you make, and how collaboration with city leaders and local entrepreneurs can become the foundation for long-term success. For anyone who's ever looked around their community and thought, "someone should do something about that," I hope this episode serves as proof that you can be that someone.

I also shared why I believe small towns are the next frontier for developers who care. With the rise of remote work, the growing desire for connection, and the power of technology to make local business more competitive, Main Street is more valuable today than it's been in

generations. The opportunity isn't just about restoring old buildings, it's about building places where people want to live, work, and belong.

If you're passionate about community building, development, or simply curious about the story behind how Bellefontaine's comeback began, I'd love for you to give it a listen.

- Jason



You can watch the full conversation on YouTube by scanning the QR code.

DOWNTOWN BELLEFONTAINE IS NOW ON TIK TOK!



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[@downtownbellefontaine](https://www.tiktok.com/@downtownbellefontaine)

Downtown Bellefontaine is now on TikTok! Visit us at [@downtownbellefontaine](https://www.tiktok.com/@downtownbellefontaine) to explore our community through short, engaging videos. As we continue building Bellefontaine's identity as a vibrant small-town destination, especially with projects like Rainbow Row and Umbrella Avenue, this social-media update offers a fresh way to tell our story and reach new audiences.

TikTok isn't just another social platform - it works very differently than other networks. It favors authenticity, creativity, and consistency over polish and production budgets. That means even a small town like ours can stand out, simply by sharing real, everyday glimpses of local life: business spotlights, downtown events, holiday decorations, behind-the-scenes renovations, or scenes from ordinary life on the square.

A key advantage is TikTok's discoverability. The platform's algorithm surfaces content based on engagement and interest, not just follower counts. That gives small communities, local businesses, and grassroots initiatives a real chance to reach viewers who might never otherwise hear about us.

Why this matters for Bellefontaine: people everywhere are scrolling through TikTok for travel inspiration, hometown charm, and unique experiences. By showcasing our downtown's energy, holiday magic, retail scene, and local character, we can help spark curiosity - and maybe even draw new visitors or future residents.

If you already have TikTok, open the app and search

[@downtownbellefontaine](https://www.tiktok.com/@downtownbellefontaine) to follow us. If not, now's a good time to explore, scroll around, and see Bellefontaine in motion. Help us build our community's online presence one video at a time.



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DUFF KEYNOTES OHIO CDC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN DAYTON

Small Nation Founder and CEO Jason Duff served as a keynote speaker at the Ohio Community Development Corporation Association (OCDCA) Annual Conference, which took place September 17-19 at the historic Dayton Arcade in downtown Dayton.

This year's conference theme, GEM: Grow, Empower, Mobilize, invited participants to think like entrepreneurs in their communities, organizations, and personal lives. The event is recognized as Ohio's premier gathering for community development corporations, nonprofit leaders, and partners working to strengthen neighborhoods and economies across the state. New this year, the conference opened with a Microbusiness Development Summit, a full day dedicated to small business, entrepreneurship, and the ecosystems that support them.

Duff headlined the Thursday keynote lunch: Historic Activation - Unlocking Assets, Empowering Communities. The session, set inside the Dayton Arcade rotunda, highlighted how small and mid-sized cities can transform historic assets into drivers of economic growth and community vitality.

In his spotlight talk, Duff shared the story of Bellefontaine's downtown transformation, where Small Nation has led the revitalization of more than 56 historic properties, recruited dozens of new businesses, and positioned the community as a destination for food, retail, and entertainment. He demonstrated how activating historic buildings can attract investment, support entrepreneurs, and create thriving districts outside major metropolitan areas.

Following his remarks, Duff joined Kristina Scott of the Downtown Dayton Partnership, David Williams, Board Chair of Heritage Ohio, and John Gower, urban designer at CityWide Development. Together, they connected Bellefontaine's success to the Arcade's redevelopment in Dayton, offering strategies that communities of all sizes can apply.

"Historic buildings are not just relics of the past, they are assets that can be repurposed to power a community's future," Duff said. "When we invest in activating these spaces, we create opportunities for entrepreneurs, preserve local identity, and lay the foundation for long-term growth."

For more information about the Ohio CDC Association Annual Conference, visit www.ohiocdc.org.



This holiday season, Small Nation is excited to share a new round of opportunities that could be the perfect fit for you or someone you know in 2026. We have a select number of dedicated office spaces available in Downtown Bellefontaine, each offering room for solo-entrepreneurs and growing businesses to take their next step. To celebrate the season, several locations include updated holiday incentives and refreshed pricing to help you secure the right space before the new year.

For those looking for dedicated office space, BUILD Cowork + Space has multiple private offices available, and every BUILD office is now \$100 off the original monthly rate. BUILD offers a fully equipped, professional environment with amenities designed to support daily work, client meetings, and business growth. Amenities include all utilities, high-speed Wi-Fi, access to a coffee bar and kitchenette, bookable conference rooms, rooftop patio access, 24/7 secure

facility access, a full-time Community Manager, furnished offices with smart TVs and whiteboards, adjustable desks, private mailing addresses, mail and package handling, Ethernet plug-ins, daily cleaning, and access to multiple conference rooms seating from 4 to 40. Each office also includes 10 hours per month in the 10-seat conference room, free coffee and tea, rolling whiteboards, and customizable furniture packages.

The Opera Suites, right in the Historic Opera Block on the Oldest Concrete Street, also provides flexible office spaces with large historic windows, generous natural light, and proximity to restaurants, shops, and public parking. Opera Suites tenants enjoy a BUILD Cowork + Space membership as part of their lease, giving them full access to all amenities in the Opera Block and flagship location. Whether you're opening a new office, or launching a new concept, or working from home, we're here to support you from idea to opening day.



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SMALL NATION ATTENDS OEDA ANNUAL SUMMIT, RECOGNIZED AS FINALIST FOR EXCELLENCE IN PLACE-BASED DEVELOPMENT AWARD

October 21, 2025 - The Small Nation team attended the 2025 Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA) Annual Summit in downtown Akron in October, where they were recognized as a finalist for the Excellence in Place-Based Development Award. The Summit brought together more than 500 economic development professionals from across the state for three days of learning, networking, and celebrating the best in Ohio's communities.

The Excellence in Place-Based Development Award honors projects that leverage the unique assets, character, and identity of a community to drive sustainable economic growth. It celebrates efforts rooted in collaboration and place-based strategies such as downtown revitalization, community development, infrastructure improvements, planning and zoning, and tourism initiatives. Projects considered for this recognition must demonstrate measurable progress within the past two years.

"Being named a finalist for this award is a meaningful recognition of the work our team is doing in small towns

across Ohio," said Jason Duff, Founder and CEO of Small Nation. "We've seen firsthand how focusing on place - revitalizing downtowns, reimagining historic buildings, and empowering local entrepreneurs - creates long-term economic and community success."

Among the highlights of the Summit was the keynote presentation by Edward Erfurt, Chief Technical Advisor for Strong Towns and a native of Lima, Ohio. Erfurt, a passionate urbanist and advocate for resilient community development, discussed how towns can leverage existing infrastructure to address housing challenges through incremental, small-scale development. His examples focused on supporting local developers, encouraging adaptive reuse, and promoting form-based zoning that prioritizes the physical character of neighborhoods over rigid land-use segregation.

Erfurt also introduced the Strong Towns Housing Ready Toolkit, a new resource designed to help communities prepare for more diverse and attainable housing options. The toolkit outlines key policy recommendations including:

1. Allowing single-family homes to convert to duplexes or triplexes by right
2. Permitting backyard cottages in all residential zones
3. Legalizing starter homes in all residential zones
4. Eliminating minimum lot size requirements in existing neighborhoods
5. Repealing parking mandates for housing
6. Streamlining the approval process

Communities can download the full toolkit and explore these policies at strongtowns.org/housingready.

"Our mission at Small Nation aligns closely with the Strong Towns approach," Duff added. "It's about investing in existing assets, supporting local entrepreneurs, and making policy decisions that strengthen the places people already love to live."



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