

# MAIN STREET QUARTERLY REPORT

Q1 2026

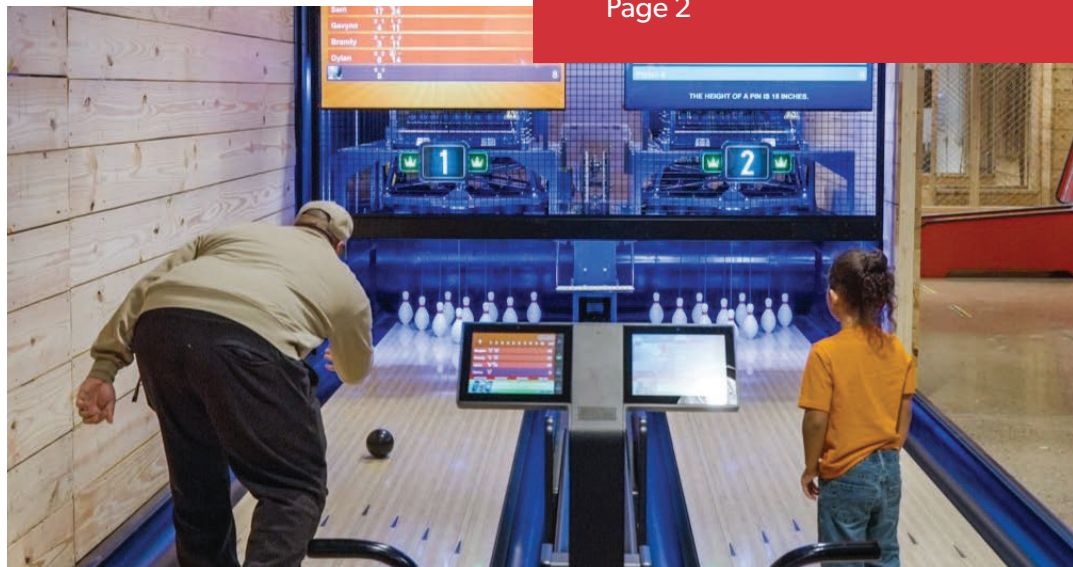
## A LETTER FROM JASON

Across the country, trend forecasters are calling 2026 the “Year of Analog.” After years of living in an always-on digital environment filled with screens, notifications, and now AI-generated content, people are looking for ways to slow down and reconnect with tangible experiences. That might look like listening to vinyl records, reading physical books, hosting a board game night, or picking up hands-on hobbies like crafting or journaling. It is not necessarily about rejecting technology entirely, but about creating balance and making space for activities that feel real, personal, and shared with others.

Small town downtowns are uniquely positioned to thrive in this moment. These places were built long before the digital era, and they naturally lend themselves to the kinds of experiences people are now craving. When you walk through a downtown district, you are

interacting with real storefronts, real people, and real places. You can browse a bookstore, sit down at a coffee shop, attend a live performance, or spend an afternoon exploring local shops. Those experiences are inherently analog.

For communities investing in their downtowns, this trend is an important reminder. Revitalization is not just about buildings or businesses. It is about creating environments where people want to spend time offline. As more people seek intentional hobbies, curated experiences, and meaningful in-person connections, downtowns will continue to serve as the natural gathering place where that analog lifestyle comes to life.



## WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 01 Letter from Jason Duff
- 02 Axe Quacks Throwing & Bowling Arcade: A Must-Visit Attraction in Downtown Bellefontaine
- 04 Small Business and AI
- 06 Billboard Spotlight: Logan Acres Senior Community & The Homestead
- 07 The Historic Opera Block
- 08 Small Nation Welcomes Carol Hayward
- 09 Featured Property: 133 West Columbus Avenue
- 10 Findlay – Hancock Chamber Downtown Success Workshop
- 11 Small Nation Podcast: Season 3 Highlights

**FEATURED ARTICLE:**  
**Axe Quacks Throwing & Bowling Arcade: A Must-Visit Attraction in Downtown Bellefontaine**  
Page 2

# AXE QUACKS THROWING & BOWLING ARCADE: A MUST-VISIT ATTRACTION IN DOWNTOWN BELLEFONTAINE

A familiar historic building in Downtown Bellefontaine has entered an exciting new chapter. Located at 139 S. Main Street, Axe Quacks Throwing & Bowling Arcade is quickly becoming one of Ohio's most talked-about entertainment destinations, blending axe throwing, arcade games, and interactive duckpin bowling into one family-friendly venue.

The building itself has a long and storied past. Once home to the Belle Theatre, later a Sears department store, and eventually a flooring shop, the space has always played a role in downtown life. Today, it has been reimagined as a place where competition, connection, and fun come together under one roof.

Owned and operated by local military veteran Rick Sheriff and his wife Tami, Axe Quacks reflects both small-town roots and a bold vision for modern entertainment. Rick, who previously worked at the venue, saw an opportunity to expand its appeal beyond axe throwing alone.

**“We wanted to create a place where everyone could walk in and find something they enjoy,” said RICK SHERIFF, owner of Axe Quacks. “Axe throwing is still a big part of who we are, but adding arcade games and duckpin bowling lets families, couples, and groups all share the experience.”**

Today's Axe Quacks offers a lineup that keeps guests coming back. Visitors can try their hand at modern axe-throwing bays with on-site training support, roll frames on four premium interactive duckpin bowling lanes, or jump into classic fun with skee-ball, darts, pinball machines, and vintage-style arcade favorites. The duckpin bowling lanes, in particular, have become a standout feature, with immersive scoring, animated displays, and themed games that appeal to all ages.

The venue also serves snacks and beverages, including adult drink options, making it easy to settle in after exploring downtown's shops, coffee houses, and

restaurants. Carry-in food is welcome for parties, and private rooms are available for birthdays, office outings, youth groups, and reunions.

**“Projects like Axe Quacks show what's possible when local ownership, historic spaces, and smart reinvestment come together,” said JASON DUFF, Founder and CEO of Small Nation. “This building has served Bellefontaine for generations, and now it's doing that again in a way that draws families, visitors, and energy back downtown.”**

For visitors, Axe Quacks adds another reason to plan a trip to Bellefontaine.

**“Axe Quacks gives visitors something unexpected and memorable,” said JAMISON THORNTON, Director of the Logan County Visitors Bureau. “It's perfect for a weekend stop, a rainy-day activity, or a group outing that pairs easily with everything else downtown has to offer.”**

Whether you're planning a date night, a family day trip, or a group celebration, Axe Quacks delivers an experience that feels both uniquely Bellefontaine and refreshingly new.

## PLAN YOUR VISIT

Axe Quacks Throwing & Bowling Arcade is located at 139 S. Main Street in Downtown Bellefontaine, Ohio. Lane reservations and private party rooms can be booked online at [www.axequacks.com](http://www.axequacks.com), and walk-ins are always welcome. For questions or group inquiries, the team can be reached by phone at (937) 404-4055. Private parties and group events may also be scheduled outside of normal business hours by request.

## HOURS

Thursdays: 4:00-10:00pm  
Fridays: 4:00-11:00pm  
Saturdays: 12:00-11:00pm  
Sundays: 12:00-9:00pm





# SMALL BUSINESS AND AI



Artificial intelligence is no longer a future conversation for small businesses. It is a present-day operating tool. The debate about whether AI matters has largely passed. The real question now is how to use it well, how to integrate it into daily workflows, and how to do so without losing the character and service mentality that make small businesses strong.

One of the clearest trends heading into 2026 is the deeper, more practical integration of AI into everyday operations. This is not about flashy automation or replacing employees. It is about efficiency. In Downtown Bellefontaine, business owners are using AI to

draft marketing content, respond to customer inquiries, improve scheduling, analyze sales patterns, and reduce administrative workload. When used correctly, AI frees up time. And time is one of the most limited resources a small business owner has. The goal is not to remove the human element. It is to create more space for it. Owners and staff can spend more time focused on service, product quality, and growth decisions that actually move the business forward.

When small business owners were asked what their most pressing AI questions were, the responses were practical and thoughtful. Most are not asking whether they should use

AI. They are asking how to use it better. A major theme was training and prompting. Business owners want to understand how to structure better questions, how to refine prompts so the output reflects their own voice, and how to evaluate which tools are best for specific tasks. That signals maturity in the conversation. The interest is not in surface-level shortcuts. It is in skill development and real world application.

Authenticity is another central concern. Many owners are already using AI to draft letters, create social media captions, conduct research, and organize marketing campaigns. At the same time, there

is caution about sounding robotic or losing the personal connection that defines a local business. That concern is valid. AI should support a service-first approach, not replace it. The businesses that will succeed are those that use AI to increase efficiency while strengthening relationships, creativity, and trust. Technology should enhance clarity and consistency, not dilute personality.

There are also broader concerns that deserve attention. Questions about job displacement, overreliance, environmental impact, and the challenge of distinguishing between human and AI-generated content are part of the discussion. That balance of optimism and caution is healthy. Every major technological shift creates both opportunity and disruption. Those who learn how to apply it strategically will benefit. Those who ignore it risk falling behind. The key is thoughtful integration rather than blind adoption.

AI is also reshaping how small towns analyze growth and make strategic decisions. Tools like Placer.ai have become central to how we understand visitation patterns and regional influence in Downtown Bellefontaine. Placer.ai aggregates anonymized mobility and transaction data to show where visitors are coming from, how often they visit, and how they behave once they arrive. The data confirms what many have sensed on the ground. A majority of downtown visits are coming from outside Bellefontaine's home ZIP code. Bellefontaine is functioning as a regional destination, not simply a local Main Street.

Even more important, out-of-market visitation has grown year over year while several nearby markets remain flat or are trending downward. January opened particularly strong,

aligning with record-setting sales weekends reported by multiple downtown businesses. The numbers validate that our downtown brand, tenant mix, and programming are resonating beyond our immediate population base. That insight matters for recruitment, marketing, and long-term investment.

Origin data shows that Bellefontaine serves as the "capital downtown" for a broad rural ring, while still drawing meaningful traffic from larger surrounding communities. A concentrated cluster of ZIP codes accounts for a significant share of total visits. That makes regional marketing highly efficient. It also strengthens our recruitment conversations. When we can demonstrate sustained regional pull backed by real data, we can support stronger tenants and more ambitious concepts than our population alone would suggest.

At the same time, the data reveals opportunity. Retail leakage analysis shows that residents still leave town for bundled errand trips and everyday essentials. Downtown does not need to replicate a power center. It does, however, have the opportunity to strategically add the right daily-use anchors and complementary services to intercept more of those trips. We have won attention and visits. The next phase is increasing spend per visit and giving people more reasons to return more often.

All of this connects to another ongoing trend: the demand for experiences, not just products. Online purchasing remains strong, but people are becoming more intentional about where they spend in-person time. Businesses offering classes, tastings, workshops, demonstrations, and limited-time events are creating reasons for people to show up. These

are experiences that cannot be replicated online or easily found in nearby cities. That is where small towns have an advantage. When technology handles background tasks and data guides strategy, business owners can focus more energy on experience design and customer engagement.

Marketing trends reinforce this shift. Short-form, high-frequency content on platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts is now a core communication channel. Production value matters less than consistency and authenticity. A business owner with a phone and a clear message can compete for attention alongside national brands. Behind-the-scenes moments, product education, and direct conversations with customers often outperform polished ads. AI can assist in drafting scripts, organizing ideas, and identifying trends, but the face and voice of the business still matter most.

Taken together, the direction is clear. AI is becoming a support system rather than the centerpiece. Data tools are sharpening decision-making rather than replacing instinct. Marketing is becoming more personal and more visual. And successful small businesses are creating reasons for people to be present, not just to purchase.

In Downtown Bellefontaine, this combination works. Lean into local knowledge. Use new tools thoughtfully. Let data inform strategy. And create experiences that feel specific to place. Technology will continue to evolve in 2026 and beyond. The communities and businesses that thrive will be those that treat AI not as a shortcut, but as a practical tool that supports stronger relationships, better decisions, and sustainable growth.

# BILLBOARD SPOTLIGHT: LOGAN ACRES SENIOR COMMUNITY & THE HOMESTEAD

Logan Acres Senior Community has been a trusted part of Logan County for more than 175 years, providing compassionate care and support to generations of local families. As a county-owned and operated community, Logan Acres remains deeply committed to offering high-quality long-term nursing care, assisted living, and short-term rehabilitation close to home. Their mission has always been simple: serve the people of this region with dignity, respect, and a genuine sense of community. That legacy continues today as Logan Acres blends modern care with the warmth and personal attention that families have relied on for decades.

Logan Acres' recent billboard campaign with COMSTOR Outdoor has been helping to share the message across the region about the services and opportunities available at Logan Acres and The Homestead. The Homestead offers private apartments designed for comfort, safety, and independence, creating the perfect balance of freedom and support for residents who may need a little help with daily living. With its welcoming, homelike environment and dedicated team, The Homestead at Logan Acres is another way Logan Acres continues its long-standing commitment to caring for the community.

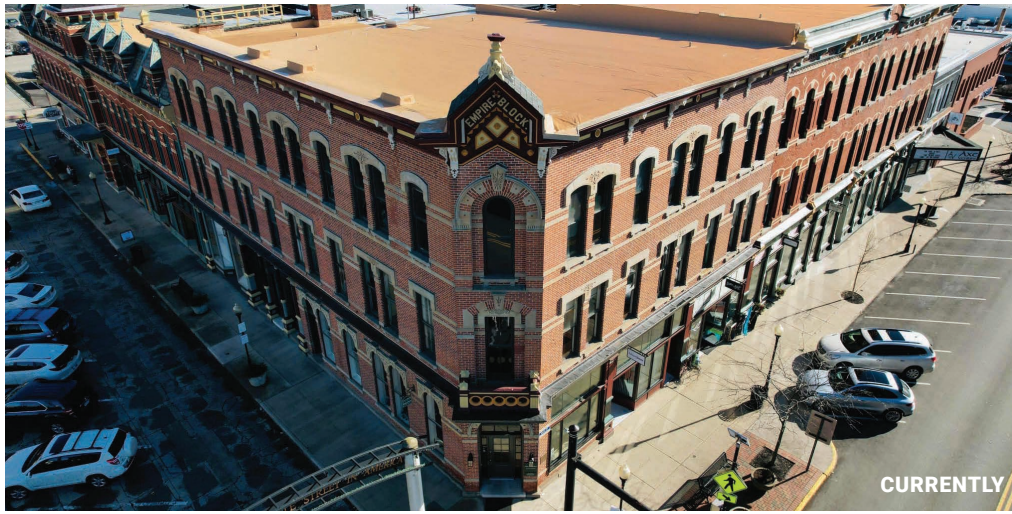
Share your message and learn more about how COMSTOR Outdoor can help your business at [comstoroutdoor.com](http://comstoroutdoor.com)



**COMSTOR  
OUTDOOR**

**NICK BOZMAN**  
REGIONAL SALES REP  
[nbozman@smallnation.com](mailto:nbozman@smallnation.com)  
937-565-9785





## THE HISTORIC OPERA BLOCK

The Historic Opera Block is scheduled for a major upgrade this year, and it is a clear example of how one project can change the trajectory of an entire block. When Small Nation acquired the Opera and Empire Blocks in 2021, the buildings were condemned, partially collapsed, and symbolized decades of neglect. Upper floors sat dark and unused, the roof had failed, and safety issues had pushed the property out of productive use. Rather than viewing the building as a liability, the focus was on its potential. The first phase was not glamorous. It required six months of cleanup, structural stabilization, and close coordination with the city and fire department just to make the building safe and functional again.

Once the building was stabilized, the strategy shifted to intentional redevelopment. The goal was not simply to fill storefronts, but to curate a mix of tenants that would reinforce each other and create reasons for people to spend more time downtown. Investments in the facade and storefronts were made early to signal momentum and pride

of place. Historic brick was restored, transom windows were reopened, and the exterior was brought back to a look that respected the building's history while clearly signaling that something new was happening. This physical reinvestment made tenant recruitment easier and helped reestablish confidence in the block.

Today, the Opera Block is once again contributing energy to the heart of Bellefontaine. Retail, food, services, office space, and experience-based businesses now coexist under one roof, creating activity throughout the day and into the evening. The lesson is straightforward: historic buildings cannot be treated as static assets or short-term balance sheet plays. When upper floors are activated, tenant mix is intentional, and design decisions are made with the whole district in mind, buildings become catalysts. The Opera Block did not just add square footage back into use - it helped restore momentum, confidence, and a sense of possibility in the center of town. And we cannot wait to continue to share updates with you.

# COWORK WITH US!

AT ANY OF OUR LOCATIONS!

# BUILD.

COWORK + SPACE

139 W Columbus Avenue  
Bellefontaine, OH 43311

The  
**OPERA**  
SUITES  
by  
**BUILD.**

COWORK + SPACE

112 ½ East Court Avenue  
Bellefontaine, OH 43311

# BUILD.

COWORK + SPACE

**MARYSVILLE**

129 N Main Street  
Marysville, OH 43040

COMING SOON!  
**BUILD.**

COWORK + SPACE

**PIQUA**

113 East High Street  
Piqua, OH, 45356

937-589-2600

INFO@BUILDCOWORK.COM

# SMALL NATION WELCOMES CAROL HAYWARD: STRENGTHENING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND STORAGE OPERATIONS



BUILD Cowork + Space and COMSTOR Self-Storage, community-driven brands operated under the Small Nation umbrella, are pleased to welcome Carol Hayward to the team. Carol brings a diverse professional background rooted in customer service excellence, real estate, office management, and self-storage operations - experience that aligns directly with both brands' commitment to thoughtful service and operational excellence.

Carol joins the organization with decades of experience across multiple industries, including real estate sales, office administration,

accounting support, and hands-on self-storage facility management. A licensed Realtor in the state of Florida, she has consistently exceeded \$1 million in annual sales and is widely recognized for her reliability, attention to detail, and strong customer-first mindset.

In her role, Carol will support both BUILD Cowork + Space and COMSTOR Self-Storage, assisting with daily operations, customer experience, and administrative functions across both brands. Her role is intentionally cross-functional—helping ensure consistency, professionalism, and a welcoming experience for members, tenants, and storage customers alike.

“What really drew me to BUILD and COMSTOR is the diversity of the work and the culture behind it,” said Hayward. “There’s a strong emphasis on community, authenticity, and teamwork. It’s an environment where people genuinely care about the people they serve.”

BUILD Cowork + Space is a modern coworking and private office concept focused on supporting entrepreneurs, remote professionals, startups, and growing teams throughout Ohio’s small-town communities. BUILD locations offer flexible workspaces, private offices, meeting rooms, and event spaces intentionally designed to foster productivity, collaboration, and authentic community connection.

COMSTOR Self-Storage extends that same people-first philosophy into the storage industry. COMSTOR currently operates four professionally managed self-storage facilities in the Lakeview and Ada areas of Ohio, serving individuals, families, and businesses with clean,

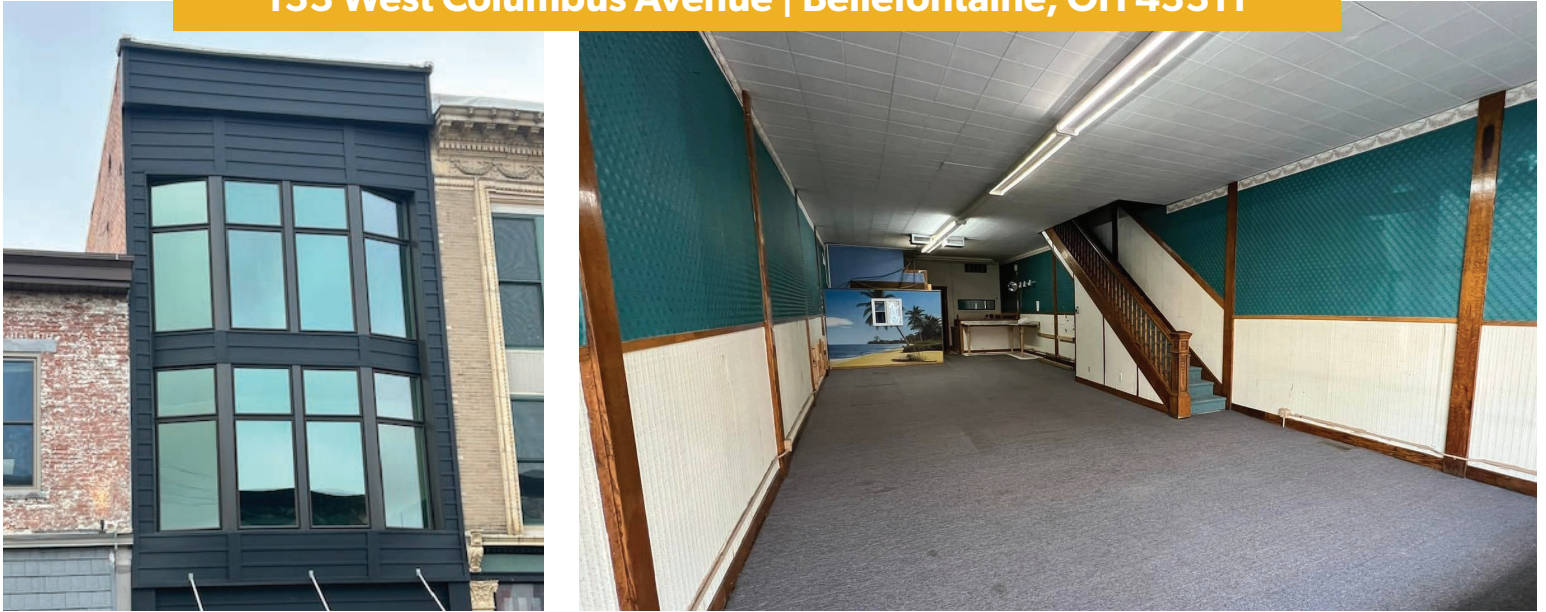
secure, and convenient storage solutions. Each facility features 24/7 security monitoring, providing peace of mind for customers who need reliable and secure storage access.

Designed for modern convenience, COMSTOR allows customers to rent and manage storage units entirely online, eliminating the need for in-person visits or staff interaction if preferred. From selecting a unit to signing a lease and making payments, the entire process can be completed digitally—while still offering responsive, local support when customers need it.

Originally from the Springfield/Enon area, Carol recently returned to Ohio to reconnect with her roots and continue the next chapter of her career. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her Goldendoodle and Maine Coon cat, exploring creative outlets like candle making and vinyl crafts, attending live music, watching movies, and—when the opportunity presents itself—parasailing.

Carol places a strong value on community and connection, aligning closely with BUILD and COMSTOR’s broader mission to create spaces and services that support people at every stage of life and business. Her guiding philosophy reflects that mindset: “Strength doesn’t come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn’t.”

With her well-rounded experience, positive energy, and collaborative approach, Carol Hayward’s addition further strengthens BUILD Cowork + Space and COMSTOR Self-Storage’s commitment to delivering secure, accessible, and community-centered solutions across Ohio.

**133 West Columbus Avenue | Bellefontaine, OH 43311**

**Lease Rate: \$1,300 per month | Square Footage: 2,520 sq. ft.**

**This spacious and well-maintained commercial space is a blank canvas for development to fit your business' needs. With high visibility in a bustling area, the space has convenient access to a parking lot in the back. The versatile layout is suitable for various business types.**

**Tenant is responsible for water/sewer, gas, electric, internet and snow removal in front of space and sidewalks. Includes one dedicated parking space. Landlord is responsible for trash.**

## **CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**937.565.4580 | [SMALLNATIONSTRONG.COM/PROPERTIES/133-WEST-COLUMBUS/](https://smallnationstrong.com/properties/133-west-columbus/)**

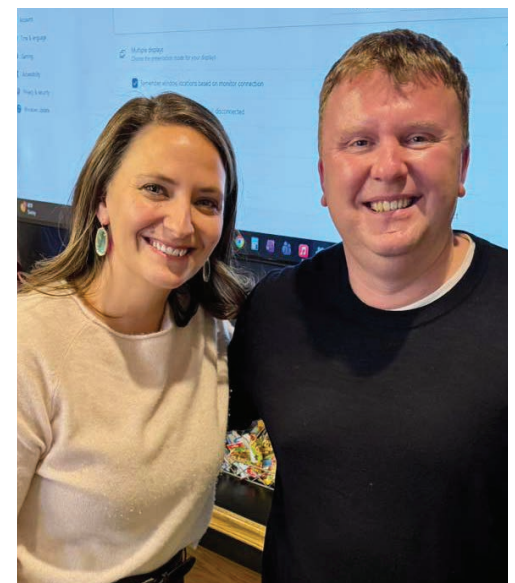
# FINDLAY - HANCOCK CHAMBER DOWNTOWN SUCCESS WORKSHOP

Small Nation was in Findlay this week presenting at the Findlay-Hancock County Chamber of Commerce Downtown Success Workshop. It was the kind of room where the momentum was clear from the start. Business owners, community leaders, and local champions showed up ready to talk about growth, investment, and what it truly takes to move a downtown forward. That kind of alignment does not happen by accident. It is built intentionally over time.

Jason Duff and team member Ann Donnelly shared practical strategies from their work at Small Nation and lessons from projects across the country. They discussed activating underutilized buildings, supporting small businesses, creating experiential destinations, and staying disciplined about long-term vision. What stood out most was the openness in the room—the Findlay community’s willingness to ask tough questions and share honest feedback, where meaningful progress begins.

It is no surprise that Findlay continues to receive national recognition. Being named the top micropolitan area in the United States for 11 consecutive years by Site Selection magazine reflects sustained economic strength, steady leadership, and a business climate that consistently attracts opportunity. That success is visible downtown in the pride reflected in storefronts, investment in the streetscape, and a clear commitment to quality. It’s the result of strong collaboration between local leaders, business owners, and a community that believes in its downtown’s future.

While in town, Jason and Ann also visited several iconic local businesses, including Dietsch Brothers, Wilson’s, False Chord, and Findlay Brewing. These are the types of brands that anchor a downtown’s identity. They create experiences, memories, and loyalty that extend well beyond a single transaction. Small Nation is grateful to the Chamber, city leadership, and everyone who extended a warm welcome. Findlay is doing important work, and its continued progress will be worth watching.



# CONTRIBUTORS



**Jason Duff**  
jason@smallnation.com



**Adam Rammel**  
adam@smallnation.com



**Mike Hibner**  
mike@smallnation.com



**Bo Alexander**  
bo@smallnation.com



**Keyne Strickland**  
keyne@smallnation.com



**Brianna Lewis**  
brianna@buildcowork.com

**SMALL  
NATION**

**PODCAST**

**SEASON THREE**

**10,000 + LISTENS**



**Ep. 101: Jamie Burton & Robin Burton, Owners of Allways Brewin'**

**???**  
**THIS COULD  
BE YOU!**

We're casting for Season Three guests. Own a small business? Have a compelling story to tell? Know of someone who you want to hear from? Reach out today to producer Ethan DeLeon at [ethan@smallnation.com](mailto:ethan@smallnation.com)

If you'd like more information about becoming a Small Nation Podcast sponsor, please reach out to [ethan@smallnation.com](mailto:ethan@smallnation.com)!

Thank you for considering sponsorship and for helping small towns grow!

**THANK YOU TO  
OUR SPONSOR**

**coverlink**  
INSURANCE

# TRUSTED BUSINESS PARTNERS



**LEVEL**  
**MB**  
CONSTRUCTION



**BOLDMAN**  
**PRINTING**  
EST. 1978 | URBANA

937.653.3431  
1333 N. Main St • Urbana, Ohio  
www.boldmanprinting.com



**Quest**  
Federal Credit Union  
*Explore the Possibilities*

QUESTFCU.COM



**BEST**  
DOOR & WINDOW



**KINGSVIEW**  
**PARTNERS**  
COLTON LOWRY

EST. 2010

**REVIVAL**  
DESIGN COLLECTIVE



**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Laura Duncil, CRCP™  
937-843-4729



**THRIVE**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**PARTNERS**™  
IGNITING POTENTIAL, FUELING SUCCESS  
WWW.THRIVECOMMUNITYPARTNERS.COM



**HESS**  
**LUMBER**



**PEAK ONE**  
RESTORATIONS

KYLE DAVIS  
Trusted Storm Claims Specialist  
Residential & Commercial  
937-935-9155



**coverlink**  
INSURANCE

COVERLINK.COM  
937.592.9076



**COMSTOR**  
**OUTDOOR**

NICK BOZMAN  
REGIONAL SALES REP  
937-565-9785