



LETTER FROM THE **PRESIDENT**



Erie plays an important role in today's economy, not only in our region, but across the nation. As our community emerged from the shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic, we demonstrated that our region is strong, innovative, and able to prevail in the face of yet another challenge. This reinforces the legacy of resilience we know to be alive and well in the region and makes it one of the best places to work and live.

The Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership is proud to report 2022 as one of the organization's most successful years in its 148-year history. Our members and investors are the lifeblood of the organization and by supporting one another, you make the Erie region a great place to live, work, and conduct business.

This 2022 annual report outlines a brief overview of chamber activities undertaken throughout this year as well as our strong platform and bold vision for the future. It embodies the chamber's relevance through the hard work of our strategic partners, volunteers, and entire membership. In the pages that follow, you'll see how our work continues to help businesses grow and prosper.

None of that, however, would be possible without the chamber team. who work tirelessly in support and dedication to you – our members. Every team member is willing and able to assist our members and provide resources to maximize member benefits such as unprecedented advocacy representation, networking opportunities, and a plethora of community involvement.

I extend a sincere and heartfelt gratitude to our members for your investment and continued support of the work we do on behalf of the business community. I hope this report inspires you to become even more involved with the Erie Regional Chamber during the upcoming year and to encourage others to join us.

Without you, none of this would have happened. With you, this report promises greater things to come.

President & CEO

DIRECTORY

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Bassam Dabbah US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Inc.

Amanda Duncan Radius CoWork

Michael Edwards Marquette Savings Bank

Philip English Arent Fox LLP

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Kathleen Getz Mercyhurst University

Charles Gray **Corry Community Development Corporation**

Bruce Kern Curtze Food Service

Anita Kuchcinski Northwest

Christina Marsh Erie Insurance Group

Brian Polito School District of the City of Erie

James Rutkowski, Jr. **Industrial Sales &** Manufacturing Company

Nick Scott Jr. Scott Enterprises

James Sherrod Bayfront NATO, Inc.

Jim Stevenson

PNC Financial Services Group

Thomas Tupitza Knox McLaughlin Gornall and Sennett, P. C.

Craig Ulmer Community Health Net

Brian Waugaman Erie Federal Credit Union

Dave Zimmer **ERIEBANK**

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



To Our Members:

It has been my honor to serve as the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership's Board of Directors chair for the last two years. I am grateful for the support of the board, committees, chamber team, and of course you - our members - during what have undoubtedly been unexpected and unprecedented times. Throughout it all, the Erie Regional Chamber remained committed to advancing Erie's regional economy and its businesses.

Equally, our business community rose above and exceeded challenges never anticipated despite the global pandemic - a testament to the strength and determination within our community. With planned investment into the community exceeding \$1 billion, Erie continues moving forward. Its collective success speaks to this business community's dedication to Erie's ongoing evolution and the opportunities on its horizon.

As my time as chair comes to a close, I thank each of you for your steadfast support of the Erie Regional Chamber. With your continued partnership, I have no doubt that the Erie Regional Chamber will help our community grow and thrive for generations to come.

All The Best.

Christing Marsh

Christina Marsh

Chief Diversity and Community Development Officer Erie Insurance



Chamber Members:

I eagerly await the opportunity to begin service to our business community as the next chairman of the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership Board of Directors. And I am grateful to Christina Marsh – our outgoing chair – for her leadership over the last two years.

In 2023, the Erie Regional Chamber will continue executing its multi-faceted program of work to lead Erie's economic evolution and provide ongoing service to Erie's business community. Together, we will continue building on the incredible momentum regained over the last few years to meet the diverse needs of chamber members and the community.

Specific initiatives have been planned throughout the year to promote engaging networking opportunities for professionals, provide exposure for chamber businesses, recognize and honor community leaders, celebrate our local businesses, engage elected officials in advocacy efforts, and provide educational forums to build knowledge and awareness among businesses.

This year, I encourage you to take full advantage of your chamber membership. The chamber team and board of directors stand ready to assist you in realizing the wealth of benefits that membership affords you. Thank you for your ongoing investment in the Erie Regional Chamber. I look forward to serving you as board chairman in a healthy and prosperous 2023.

Sincerely,

Christopher C. Clark, DO, MHA President and Chief Executive Officer **AHN Saint Vincent Hospital**

Your trusted business partners for 125 years and counting.

For the past 125 years, we have provided legal support and experience to the region's business community. We are committed to continue as your strategic partner to navigate the extraordinary challenges in the years ahead.

Call: (814) 870-7600 or visit: macdonaldillig.com

MacDonald, Illig, Jones & Britton, LLP 100 State St. Suite 700, Erie, PA 16507



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Marquette Lavings bank





The Hometown Bank



Are you sure your business expenses are fully optimized?

Your financial team shouldn't have to spend their time contacting suppliers, comparing numbers, and renegotiating contracts.

Our clients pay fair rates, and not a penny more. We ensure businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations are getting the best business services at the best price.

Working with Schooley Mitchell is 100% risk free. If we can't deliver savings, you incur no cost.

Contact me for more information:

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Broadline supplier to your favorite restaurants, pubs and clubs.









MISSION STATEMENT

Leading Erie's economic evolution through awareness, advocacy and access to people, education and resources that businesses need to thrive.

VISION STATEMENT

An Erie economy that provides for the wealth and well being of all our citizens.

The Erie Regional Chamber is leading Erie's economic evolution through awareness, access, and advocacy for the broader community. Our members receive forward-thinking solutions from our expert team so that they can thrive throughout our region and beyond.

AWARENESS

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF UNIQUE, **MEMBER-ONLY ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES AND CONNECT WITH LOCAL COMPANIES THAT MEET YOUR CURRENT BUSINESS NEEDS.**

CORE FUNCTIONS SNAPSHOT

BUSINESS ATTRACTIONpg. 17	WURKFURGE DEVELOPMENT	pg. 21
STARTUPS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP pg. 19	GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS	pg. 23

148 YEARS OF SERVICE

1874 The original chamber was called the Erie Board of Trade with the purpose to encourage and protect trade and commerce at the City of Erie.

1902 According to Erie Evening Herald, a second chamber of commerce launched on March 7, 1902 to encourage and protect business interests as well as cultivate business and social relations between members.

1914 The Erie Board of Trade and the Erie Chamber of Commerce merged in 1914 to mirror chambers across the country.

1953 Over time, the membership reflected business beyond the city limits and the organization changed its name to the Greater Erie Chamber of Commerce and in 1974 to the Erie Area Chamber of Commerce to solidify its expanded involvement into Erie County communities and eight strategic areas similar to its role today.

2002 In November, Erie Conference on Community Development, the Erie Area Chamber of Commerce, and Erie Insight merged to form the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership as we know it today.

ACCESS

MEMBER BENEFITS

GET ACCESS TO PEOPLE, EDUCATION, AND INFORMATION THAT WILL ELEVATE YOUR GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR YOUR BUSINESS.

ADVOCACY

WE ARE YOUR PARTNER, ADVOCATING FOR HEALTHY REGIONAL ECONOMIC **DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.**

BUSINESS OUTREACH .pg. 25 EVENTS. pg. 29

pg. 27

YEAR IN REVIEW

2022 Year in Review

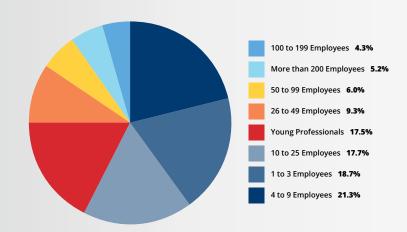
118 **NEW MEMBERS 80% RETENTION RATE**



This year, the team participated in the Hooked On Books Program at the **NEIGHBORHOOD ART HOUSE** as well as serving lunch and decorating for the holidays at the ERIE CITY MISSION.

696

43,320 **EMPLOYEES**



Referrals online membership directory referrals

1,243,140

AVG. 781 REFERRALS PER MEMBER

34,313

DIRECT CONTACTS LOGGED IN MEMBER DATABASE

Events

IN-PERSON EVENTS

2,879

IN-PERSON ATTENDEES **2022 Special Mentions:**

12 RIBBON CUTTINGS PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS PENNSYLVANIA CHAMBER LEADERSHIP CANADIAN CONSULATE GENERAL



PITTSBURGH BUSINESS TIMES FEATURE

The Erie Regional Chamber partnered with the Pittsburgh Business Times to provide members with unique access to the Pittsburgh business community. The Pittsburgh Business Times included a 12-page special edition about Erie in the June publication.

15,648 SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



(iii) 5,200 2,351 **FACEBOOK** LINKEDIN



3,212 **INSTAGRAM**



4,885 **TWITTER**

Emails & Newsletters



6,177 SUBSCRIBERS **261,146 EMAILS SENT**



ERIE HOMECOMING

Erie Homecoming is the region's largest event about all things Erie including the regional economy, investment opportunities, and projects transforming the community. Attendees connect with local leaders and community advocates during engaging conference sessions, collaborative conversations, and immersive experiences.

2022: LEVERAGING ERIE'S ASSETS RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW

Over 350 people attended Erie Homecoming in person for a comprehensive overview on leveraging Erie's assets for business success. Throughout the two-day event, over 50 organizations educated and informed the audience about resources available to regional businesses. Local businesses that either make or build products in Erie lined the corridor to welcome all before gathering in the ballroom for the main event.

The first day kicked off with Erie native Josh Knauff from Boston Consulting Group, who shared his perspective as a global consultant on Erie's opportunity to grow and prosper.



THE 2022 COMMUNITY TOUR INCLUDED A STOP AT ERIE MALLEABLE IRON (EMI) FOR A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT THE PLANT'S REDEVELOPMENT.

ERIE'S EMERGING LEADERS

This year, the Erie Regional Chamber and Young Erie Professionals hosted the first-ever young professionals conference as part of Erie Homecoming. Representative Ryan Bizzarro from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives shared insights into civic engagement and community leadership followed by sessions on networking and also diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

During the Women in Leadership panel, we were joined by two of Pennsylvania's most prominent women leaders - Neeli Bendapudi, president of Penn State University, and Cynthia Hundorfean, president and chief executive officer of Allegheny Health Network. Both women offered their candor, insights, intelligence, and positive energy about inclusive leadership, breaking glass ceilings, navigating uncharted territory, and how their respective institutions view the Erie opportunity.

Erie's heart and soul – its cultural and community organizations - began the second day, demonstrating our community's vibrancy, "big city" vibe, and the truly world-class quality of place amenities within our region. Attendees learned ways to actively engage, invest, and collaborate in Erie's success through private, public, and philanthropic channels. Featured opportunities included the Erie Regional Chamber's newlyformed angel investment fund, multiple giving opportunities through the Erie Community Foundation, and project support and awareness regarding Infinite Erie's playbook for inclusive growth.

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

The 2022 Celebration of Excellence continued the tradition of honoring businesses that demonstrate a commitment to progress. Over 200 guests gathered together outdoors for a beautiful evening on our picturesque bayfront at the Erie Yacht Club.

2022 AWARD RECIPIENTS



The Louis. J. Tullio Community Service Award is bestowed upon an individual or organization with a legacy of commitment to going above and beyond on behalf of the Erie community. It recognizes those who have a demonstrated legacy of outstanding service using their abilities, resources, and energies to sustain the Erie community's values, build on its needs, and promote its defined goals and visions.

Winner: Linda Stevenson, ATHENA Erie



The Small Business Award recognizes a breakout new business or existing small business champion committed to collaboration and mentorship within the small business community. The recipient contributes to the community's economic health through exceptional business practices and customer service, demonstrates a high level of community involvement, and has a consistent record of strong employee relations and dedication to developing their company culture.

Winner: Monacella Massage & Kinesiology



The Forward Award honors the achievements of local businesses building a world-class workforce by recognizing best practices in workplace flexibility, recruiting, retention and development. Recipients demonstrate an attitude of excellence and outstanding achievement through creative solutions and excel in supporting and reinforcing the values of their company.

Winner: Carl Nicolia, PSNERGY



The **Young Professional of the Year** celebrates the accomplishments of a highly motivated individual, emerging leader from Young Erie Professional's membership, who has shown excellence, creativity, and initiative within their profession and acts as a role model to their peers.

Winner: Amanda Duncan



ERIE AMBASSADORS

The Erie Ambassador program is designed to give community professionals a "behind the scenes" look at where Erie has been historically and what's taking place to move Erie forward into the future. This popular program was put on hold through the pandemic and 2022 was the year we kicked it back into full swing!

The program filled quickly with 27 excited Erie County professionals and residents eager to learn about all things Erie. Our sessions were diverse, unique, and offered an in-depth perspective on Erie's history, heart, and opportunities on the horizon.

This year's cohort began with an orientation to understanding chambers of commerce and how the Erie Regional Chamber is leading Erie's economic evolution. Pete Zaphiris from Great Lakes Insurance shared his personal story and "Why Erie" and gave a sneak peek at his development plans for the 1128 State Street building and other downtown properties. The Erie County Historical Society hosted our next session to better understand our community's past before the Erie Ambassadors got a glimpse of what the future holds with the Erie Downtown Development Corporation.

Erie Ambassadors also toured Wabtec and Great Lakes Automation to get a peek inside one of our leading industries - manufacturing - and what it means for Erie. Erie Ambassadors 2022 experienced something new – a road trip! The group toured around Corry, exploring the region and positive economic momentum happening throughout the county. Special thanks to chamber members Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority for transportation and Impact Corry for sharing your insights on the Corry community.

Registration for Erie Ambassadors 2023 opens in January.

Powerful leadership We believe in working together to build a stronger community for all.





Launched in 2019, Erie Forward is the chamber's five-year economic development initiative designed to recruit, attract, expand, and retain businesses in a manner that ensures economic development throughout the region meets the interest and needs of a diverse population and creates opportunities that lay a foundation for sustainable economic success for generations to come. Erie Forward encompasses five pillars of success: existing industry support and entrepreneurship; workforce development and talent attraction; new business attraction and investment; quality of place, advocacy, and sustainability; and regional competitiveness and collaboration.

Our team at the chamber wholeheartedly believes our work contributes to bringing this vision to life and it is our collective responsibility to assure our economy can provide for the wealth and well-being of all our citizens. Erie Forward provides us with a thoughtful and thorough blueprint to guide that process and be the stewards of curating and sharing our community's collective success in economic development.

2022 Progress Towards Erie Forward Goals

450 JOBS

IN SIX TARGET INDUSTRIES

2,000 NET NEW JOBS IN SIX TARGET INDUSTRIES

The Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership remained committed to creating 2,000 net new jobs in the Erie MSA by the close of 2024. Despite a global pandemic, the regional economy had a net gain of 450 jobs within the six target industries. While modest, most sectors have shown net gains except for manufacturing and tech/digital/ gaming. It should be noted that the total workforce in the Erie County MSA shrunk by 2,300 since 2020. This trend is not new and remains an area of primary concern to the economy's long-term prosperity.

250 ANNUAL BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION VISITS TO SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESS

ERCGP is on target to hit its goal of 250 business outreach visits - where we find out firsthand a business's most pressing needs and directly connect them to programs and resources that can best help. As a result of these visits, the chamber identified workforce and access to capital as the top two issues facing our regional business community. Workforce needs span all industry sectors while capital is still needed to help recover from 2020 and 2021 as well as for facility and equipment investments to address growth demands.

OUTREACH VISITS

INVESTMENT

\$250 MILLION CAPITAL INVESTMENT

The capital investment goal of \$250M over the five-year Erie Forward plan has been exceeded by a wide margin. Executed, underway, or planned investment is more than **\$1 billion** by multiple anchor institutions and businesses throughout the community. Total capital investment across all sectors since 2018 is approaching \$2 billion. Many of these investments will help to meet the goal of achieving a 2% increase in Erie County's industrial and commercial tax base.

SUCCESSFUL CONSTRUCTION OR PROGRESS TOWARDS FIVE **PROJECTS IN OPPORTUNITY ZONES**

To date, there have been four Opportunity Zone investments – representing 80% completion towards this goal within Erie Forward. Several other investments are being considered and the Erie Regional Chamber is optimistic that those projects will close in early 2023.

ZONES INVESTMENTS

FACILITATE CREATION OF FIVE NEW SPEC SITES AND **BUILDINGS TO GO TO MARKET**

The Erie Regional Chamber continues promoting Erie with site selectors and national real estate development firms at conferences, meetings in major metros with Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development, and in one-on-one meetings. However, the lack of spec buildings and ready-to-go sites for development remains a major constraint regarding business attraction. The Erie Regional Chamber is committed to working with local partners to bring this goal to fruition.

ERIE FORWARD INVESTORS

AHN Saint Vincent Hospital Altair Real Estate Services American Tinning & Galvanizing Company Arent Fox LLP **Associated Clinical Laboratories Bavada Pediatrics** City of Erie CMIT Solutions of Erie Community Health Net County of Erie, Government Curtze Food Service **Decision Associates Encompass Health** Rehabilitation Hospital of Erie Erie County Community College of PA Erie Federal Credit Union Erie Homes For Children & Adults, Inc. Erie Insurance Group Erie VA Medical Center Erie Water Works **ERIEBANK Gannon University** Great Lakes Automation Services, Inc./AMi Greater Erie Economic **Development Corporation Griffith Properties Industrial Sales &** Manufacturing Company Insurance Management Company IET 24. FOX 66 & YourErie.com Knox McLaughlin Gornall and Sennett, P. C. Lakeshore Community Services, Inc. MacDonald, Illig, Jones & Britton, LLP Marquette Savings Bank McCormick Structural Systems, Inc. McInnes Rolled Rings Mercyhurst University Millcreek Township National Fuel Gas Distribution Corp. Nightingale Nursing and Rehabilitation Center Northwest Penelec - First Energy Penn State Erie, The Behrend College PennWest University Perry Construction Group Inc **PNC Financial Services Group Reed Manufacturing Company Scott Enterprises** Smith Provision Company, Inc. **Summit Township Supervisors** Team Hardinger The Erie Community Foundation **Transportation Solutions**

Uber Technologies, Inc.

ValueMomentum Inc.

Widget Financial

VisitErie

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

> SERVICES PROVIDED

The Erie Regional Chamber serves as a central entry point for prospects looking to grow their business. Prospects looking at Erie as a possible location come from a variety of sources: existing companies in Erie, Governor's Action Team, site selection consultants, national real estate brokers, and directly from companies. All prospects are reviewed through the lens of the stated requirements of the prospect - acres needed, new or existing facility size, utility requirements, specialized assets needed (air service, rail line, port access), labor force needs, and more. Some prospects requirements cannot be met by Erie. For those where we can meet their needs, the Chamber works with land and building owners, real estate brokers, public officials, and local developers to share available assets with the prospect for consideration.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Contrary to popular opinions about economic development, over 90% of the work is focused on business retention and expansion and new business start-ups because they are already here. Taking care of existing businesses and growing new is the most cost effective spend in economic development. However, business attraction is essential to diversify Erie's economy and potentially land employers who can immediately create 25-100 jobs (or more). The greatest business attraction success in Erie's history was landing General Electric (now Wabtec) over 110 years ago — a success that transformed lives and our community in many ways. Business attraction complements existing industry — not to replace it — to create a dynamic economy.

"[Our meeting in Cleveland] went really well. All the companies appreciated getting to know more about Erie, the developments underway, candor about opportunities and challenges, your collaborative approach to economic development, and positive approach to working with developers."

Dennis Burnside Vestian Global Workplace Solutions

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT JACOB ROUCH
Vice President, Economic Development

2022 Highlights

IN 2022, THE CHAMBER FIELDED 38 INQUIRIES FROM PROSPECTS AND WERE ABLE TO SUBMIT EIGHT SITES AND/OR BUILDINGS FOR CONSIDERATION.

The region's ability to attract businesses continues to be hampered by the limited number of ready-to-go building sites and available facilities. This challenge was highlighted by Dennis Burnside and Scott Pollock of Vestian Global Workplace Solutions – site selection professionals based in Cleveland, Ohio. During our April Erie Forward briefing, Dennis and Scott amplified the need to have ready-to-build sites and/or existing space (speculatively built or vacant) to get into the consideration set for companies looking to grow or relocate. A ready-to-go build site means a site with all infrastructure and zoning in place with a single landowner. The lack of land and buildings for business attraction was noted as a top challenge in May 2019 in the Garner Economics' Competitive Realities Report and Targeted Industry Strategy commissioned by the Erie Regional Chamber. To address the site and building limitation, business, community, and political leaders need to begin discussing innovative pathways for a dedicated income stream to address our region's economic development infrastructure.

In June 2022, Burnside and Pollock coordinated a day of meetings in Cleveland between leadership from the Chamber and Erie County Redevelopment Authority, and three development firms in Cleveland. These meetings amplified the need for on-going outreach to our most immediate market to ensure that Erie is on their radar screen for investment opportunities and consistently share available land and buildings to these developers for consideration.

In March 2022, the Chamber attended the Annual Conference of the Site Selector's Guild – an organization comprised of the top 40 site selectors in the country. This event is attended by state, regional, and local economic development officials, private sector companies, and service providers from around the United States for education and networking.

The Chamber joined with the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and head of the Pennsylvania Governor's Action Team at three Pennsylvania site selector events held in Dallas (March 24th), Chicago (July 26th), and Atlanta (September 14th). These three events enabled Erie to introduce its competitive opportunities to over 25 different site selection professionals and firms throughout the country alongside Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Scranton, and the Lehigh Valley.



STARTUPS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

> SERVICES PROVIDED

The Erie Regional Chamber provides three avenues for entrepreneurship to thrive in Erie: the FIRE Accelerator, ICE Angel Education program, and the ICE Angel Fund. Each component strengthens the entrepreneurial ecosystem by attracting businesses, educating potential angel investors, and providing a mechanism to deploy investments to local entrepreneurs.

The FIRE Accelerator is an annual 10-week global business accelerator program where participating companies receive tailored curriculum, funding, mentorship, and strategic networking.

Both the ICE Education Program and the ICE Angel Fund are driving new avenues for generational wealth-building and strategic investment for Erie residents. The program is open to anyone interested in learning more about angel investing. It is taught by national thought-leaders and investors who stay current on trends and what's hot in the market.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

A thriving regional economy creates direct and indirect economic impact across the board. The Erie Regional Chamber's entrepreneurship programs bring new technology and talent to Erie while supporting new business growth. Additionally, programs like ICE Education impacts how business owners think about strategic investments professionally and personally. It drives innovation in established industries by spurring new verticals.

ICE Angel Fund will be an avenue for individuals to make strategic investments to build personal wealth with social and economic impact. The fund will provide capital to local entrepreneurs and businesses.

"The Fire Accelerator
has provided us with the
funding that is allowing us
to hit our development
goals for the year. Besides
the funding, they have been
really helpful in making
business connections and
mentoring so that we can
grow and be successful."

Edwin Williams ZenHammer

"ICE is creating a culture of investment within the Erie entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing world class, unbiased and timely information to help increase the number of smart investors and surface real opportunities to make a positive economic impact."

Brian Slawin Ben Franklin Technology Partners

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT JORDAN FULLER

Director, Entrepreneurship

2022 Highlights

OVER THE LAST YEAR, THE ERIE REGIONAL CHAMBER'S EFFORTS TO EXPAND ERIE'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM HAVE GARNERED TREMENDOUS MOMENTUM.

The **2022 FIRE Accelerator** focused on data analytics and business intelligence, which is a subset of two target industries – digital/tech/gaming and advanced business services. This year's cohort was the most diverse cohort in the program's history; seven companies are led by underrepresented populations in technology and the age range of participating founders is from 23 to 64 years old. The program attracted national and global interest with founders hailing from Virginia, New York, Nebraska, New Jersey, Missouri, Connecticut, North Carolina, Washington, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Belgium, South Korea, and Canada. The 2022 cohort attracted over 75 regional entrepreneurs and investors to its annual Demo Day reception.

The **FIRE portfolio** includes 32 companies from around the world that have completed the FIRE Accelerator program. In total, the companies have

raised over \$100 million in follow on funding and over \$60 million in revenue across the portfolio. Additionally, half of the portfolio companies established or expanded a business presence in Erie.

In partnership with the Angel Capital Association, the Erie Regional Chamber launched and completed the first cohort of the **ICE Angel Education** program less than a year after receiving a federal grant to continue building Erie's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Twenty-six program participants received seven weeks training on the basics of angel investing. Courses were taught by world class instructors with decades of experience leading some of the highest performing angel funds in the United States.

In partnership with the Appalachian Investors Alliance, the Erie Regional Chamber is leading a group of community and business leaders through the process of starting Erie's first angel fund – **ICE Angel Fund**. The goal of the fund is to support and attract entrepreneurs to the Erie region as a bookend to its accelerator program and other regional investment opportunities.



CORE FUNCTION **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

> SERVICES PROVIDED

The Erie Regional Chamber works with regional employers to successfully identify and manage talent pipelines by bridging gaps between community, industry, and service providers. By doing so, the chamber works to create viable and sustainable talent pipelines into our six target industries. One way we do this is by navigating the workforce development delivery system on behalf of the business and making the right connections to the best partners who can provide on-the-job training or similar services.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

The Erie Regional Chamber keeps a pulse on the most pressing employer and industry needs so that we can proactively address labor force challenges or accelerate growth opportunities in the future. When businesses are open to partnering with the chamber on this journey, we're able to create a holistic approach to workforce development ensuring businesses are prepared for the workforce of the future. ERCGP can then provide organizations with end-to-end solutions for their workforce needs, ensuring the sustaining growth and probability of regional businesses, while providing a comprehensive pipeline to regional talent—a key component to attracting businesses.

"I appreciate the work the Erie Regional Chamber is doing to address workforce development in manufacturing by approaching unidentified talent pools and educating not only possible partners but also educating employers."

Jim Willats Co-Founder and President **Machining Concepts**

QUESTIONS? CONTACT SEAN LYONS Workforce Development Specialist

2022 Highlights

In 2022, the Erie Regional Chamber added a full-time workforce development specialist to focus on navigating the workforce development delivery system on behalf of local businesses. This past year, ERCGP focused on advanced manufacturing – one of its six target industries identified in Garner Economics Competitive Realities and Target Industry Strategies Report – to address key challenges and opportunities facing the industry.

In January, an existing group of manufacturers

– the Erie Regional Manufacturing Partnership –
merged with ERCGP to tackle the ongoing workforce
development challenges within the industry.

The chamber also played a role in the Erie County Community College coming to fruition and continues to connect industry to educators for aligned curriculum and career pathway opportunities. In 2023, the first program – Industrial Maintenance Curriculum – is slated to launch as a result of these efforts. Additionally, the Erie Regional Chamber hosted a manufacturing employer panel to provide potential employees a candid view into modern-day manufacturing. In partnership with Erie Together, ERCGP worked to elevate advanced manufacturing to recent college graduates and current high school juniors and seniors who have decided to not pursue a traditional four-year degree.

Most recently, the Erie Regional Chamber held its first-ever industry-specific job fair for manufacturing, attracting over 100 attendees to make a move to manufacturing. The fair also highlighted service providers who work with local employers regarding onthe-job training, apprenticeships, ongoing education, and more.



CORE FUNCTION GOVERNMENT **AFFAIRS**

> SERVICES PROVIDED

The Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership advocates for common sense business advancements within local, state, and federal government. We serve as a conduit and a tool to bridge the gap between the business community, elected officials, and government entities regarding daily business operations issues like zoning and regulations to advocating for policy changes on Capitol Hill. Through regular outreach to elected officials, participation in public meetings and key community conversations, and service to a variety of community service groups, the chamber maintains a pulse on the most pressing issues facing our community.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Through our advocacy role, the Erie Regional Chamber serves as the cohesive voice for the business community. We strive to help members understand and navigate the everchanging government landscape and its effect upon the business community, saving our members time and resources. We constantly engage and maintain relationships with elected officials so that we can trade goodwill on behalf of our members when issues arise that may be standing in the way of business progress. Maintaining positive, on-going relationships with government officials at all levels is done to both communicate the business community's priorities, but also to help solve problems and build better business and government relations. Working together more constructively will help build a publicprivate partnership that be more efficient and aid in business retention, expansion, and attraction.

"The Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership has been very helpful to my business as we contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, PennDOT, and the federal government. As small businesses, we many times do not have access to politicians and are not heard individually; the chamber has embraced their role representing all businesses in Erie County to elected officials and I am happy to know they are continuing their work with all levels of governmental bodies for the well-being of all businesses in Erie County."

Brenda J. Bennett, LPI, CDRS President **Transportation Solution**

"The Canadian Consulate has long counted the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership as a friend and ally to Canada. It is a partner and conduit for expanding trade between Erie and Canada. The staff is highly professional, responsive, and engaged. When we suggest a collaboration, ERCGP goes above and beyond to make it happen."

Linda Soltis Trade Commissioner Consulate General of Canada in NY

"The PA Chamber of Business and Industry is lucky to have a partner like the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership. Their team works with our team to ensure that their members are informed and able to articulate important issues to their state officials. This partnership ensures that Erie's voice in Harrisburg is strong and effective."

Bill Miller Senior Member Executive Pennsylvania Chamber

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT CURTIS JONES, JR. Director, Governmental Affairs

2022 Highlights

The Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership began the year working to understand the American Rescue Plan funding opportunities as a means to accelerate community projects forward. Concurrently, the Erie Regional Chamber worked together with Bruce Katz and Florian Schalliol of the Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation at Drexel University, and several other Erie County partners, to build out the framework for what is now Infinite Erie. The Erie Regional Chamber remains involved in the governance and execution of Infinite Erie – the organization charged with organizing the implementation of Erie's investment playbook -- as well as securing public and private sector funding for projects and initiatives that can improve our region's competitiveness and quality of life.

Throughout the year, the Erie Regional Chamber was honored to host esteemed guests from across the Commonwealth and beyond. Each engagement created an opportunity for us to highlight the best of

Erie while addressing key areas for Erie's economic advancement. We deeply appreciate the time each of the following dignitaries took to learn more about Erie, the chamber, and the regional business community:

- CANADIAN CONSULATE GENERAL ANDRE FRENETTE
- REPRESENTATIVE JOANNA McCLINTON, HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADER
- REPRESENTATIVE DONNA OBERLANDER, REPUBLICAN MAJORITY WHIP
- REPRESENTATIVE JORDAN HARRIS, DEMOCRATIC WHIP
- PENNSYLVANIA BLACK CAUCUS
- MARISA LAGO, U.S. UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
- DR. MEHMET OZ, REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR U.S. SENATE



BUSINESS OUTREACH

> SERVICES PROVIDED

At its core, the Erie Regional Chamber facilitates connections between businesses to foster economic growth. The chamber's business outreach program is designed to plug businesses directly into resources that can meet their needs regardless of business size. After a business outreach visit, our team makes referrals to business, strategic partners, and federal, state, and local businesses that can assist with: capital and business financing; workforce development; growth and support services; entrepreneurship and innovation; and land and building needs. Think of the chamber as an extension of your team - a business concierge to find solutions to obstacles or opportunities.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Sometimes the biggest challenge for any small business is not identifying needs, but rather knowing where to go for that assistance and what to ask for. Working through the economic development system to get support without interrupting business operations can be difficult and overwhelming. After an outreach visit, the Erie Regional Chamber team handles referrals to the right resources directly - keeping your resources focused on your business. This complimentary service saves business owners valuable time otherwise wasted trying to navigate a complex economic development ecosystem.

"The Erie Regional Chamber is a leading component to the community and small businesses. The chamber teams has been a great asset to my business. They have connected me with partnerships and collaborations. I came to them with a vision of expanding my business and within days they profoundly played a huge part in securing a commercial space and collaboration to help me and my business grow. I highly recommend meeting with the chamber team to help link you to great resources, networking opportunities and bridge the gap so that your business excels."

Mary Euell Owner Barbs Family Learning Group Daycare LLC

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT KRISTEN KARRFALT

Director, Business Outreach

2022 Highlights

Every year, the Erie Regional Chamber strives to meet with a minimum of 250 regional businesses to understand their greatest challenges, opportunities, and needs. This year was no exception. Over the course of the year, the Business Action Team traversed the county to meet with businesses from all industries and sizes to gauge the ongoing impact of the global pandemic and the most immediate needs of the regional business community. The top two concerns facing businesses continue to be workforce challenges and needing additional access to capital. Businesses willingness to share challenges and opportunities offers invaluable insight to the chamber team to advocate, educate, and identify resources to assist businesses in high priority areas.

Since 2019, the Erie Regional Chamber has conducted an annual community road show. The team works remotely over the course of several weeks within communities across the county to provide immediate and direct assistance to any business. To date, the initiative has connected over 50 businesses to local resources previously unknown to their organizations.

As a result of 2022 business retention and expansion visits, the chamber team took over 750 actions as a result of business outreach visits including but not limited to resource referrals, information sharing, introductions to providers, and more. These actions have generated new sales, certifications, contract opportunities, board fulfillment, business expansions, and more throughout the region.

750

BUSINESS ACTIONS ITEMS

250
BUSINESS
OUTREACH VISITS



CORE FUNCTION MEMBER BENEFITS

> SERVICES PROVIDED

Chamber membership is an investment in Erie's prosperity. Becoming a member indicates a company's commitment to creating a vibrant and sustainable regional economy. Make the most of membership with benefits like:

- Direct referrals and connections to business leaders
- Continuing education with regional subject matter experts
- Promoting business to drive sales and new customers
- · Marketing your organization to raise awareness
- · Gaining news skills and training
- Tailored workforce and business operations solutions
- Participating in discount and affinity programs

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Our community's growth depends on diverse industries coming together to make dynamic business environments. Your continued commitment to the Erie Regional Chamber enables us to stimulate the local economy as well as advocate for pro-business climate and policies with our elected officials. Members gain insight to important issues impacting the community and gain a set at the table to solve regional challenges for continued business success.

"Being a chamber member introduced me to like-minded business leaders eager to discuss challenges and opportunities in business. I'm also exposed to businesses I'd never know about otherwise. It's been an incredible value professionally and personally and an extremely worthwhile investment."

Adam Baker Strategic Partner Schooley Mitchell

"As part of the Erie Community for over 125 years, Northwest Bank is dedicated to supporting and advancing the community we serve. The Chamber's work and support of local businesses and economic development through provided resources are an integral piece of Erie's future and success."

Anita M. Kuchcinski, Northwest Senior Vice President, Erie Commercial Market Executive

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT GABRIELLE CATRABONE

Business Development Manager

2022 Highlights

The Erie Regional Chamber welcomed 118 new members from all industries and business sizes, bringing total membership to almost 700 organizations.

The team welcomed a new business engagement manager to elevate relationships with existing members and business throughout the region. We also expanded opportunities for businesses to get engaged through our morning meet and greet events and increased member marketing via the Business Spotlight with WPSE Money Radio, Giving You The Business with Erie News Now, and Buzz Podcast with the NWPA Innovation Beehive.

The chamber remained committed to offering member-benefit programs – like the Pennsylvania Chamber's Local Chamber Cooperative Program, World Kinect Energy Services, and MyBenefits Advisor – while exploring cutting-edge partnerships like Werkberry – the Al-driven hiring platform for small business. Members using Werkberry attracted over 4,400 candidates to 227 job openings of which 154 candidates were hired at various local businesses.

118
NEW MEMBERS

696
TOTAL MEMBERS



CORE FUNCTION **EVENTS**

> SIGNATURE EVENTS

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Tee-off for a day of networking, connections, and great conversation.

ANNUAL MEETING

Gather with fellow members to conduct the "business" of our business, reflect on the year's success, and set the course for the year to come.

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

Celebrate local businesses and leaders who go above and beyond during our annual awards dinner.

ERIE HOMECOMING

Dive into engaging, immersive experiences, networking, and more during the region's largest business event about the regional economy, investment opportunities, and community transformations.

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT

Enjoy an evening on the bay as a small token of our appreciation for your membership investment in the chamber and all you do for the Erie community.

OUARTERLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ATHENA SPEAKS

In partnership with ATHENA Erie, ATHENA Speaks is a women's empowerment guest speaker series to develop, support, and honor women leaders.

DIVERSITY IN ACTION

Develop, embrace, and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace with leading local and regional experts.

LUNCH AND LEARNS

Improve your business during 20-minute power lunch webinars with local areas subject matter experts.

"I strongly recommend attending Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership events. As a 33-year sales professional these events offer the best networking opportunities. I have made new contacts, found new vendors, and would like to say made a few friends along the way."

Chuck Alessi Ford Office Technologies

"As a business owner in downtown Erie, it's vital to cultivate connections with the community. The Chamber provides multiple events that deepen relationships between businesses. I love the variety and always meet someone new!"

Missy Hitz Owner, Monacella Massage & Kinesiology LLC

QUESTIONS? CONTACT COLLEEN GROSS Director, Events and Programs

> NETWORKING EVENTS

One of the greatest values of chamber membership is the ability to directly connect with other area businesses. Networking leads to collaboration, mentorship, interesting discussions, referrals, and an overall ability to better understand the Erie business landscape. As the old business adage goes "people do business with those they know, like, and trust"... and the best way to begin building relationships is through quality networking opportunities.

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS is the premier networking event for companies interested in doing business within the greater region.

BUSINESS AND BREWSKIS is designed with the introverted professional and small business owner in mind. Speed networking maximizes attendees' ability to make multiple quality connections at one time.

CONNECT FOR COFFEE: Enjoy a cup of coffee while connecting with fellow businesses across industries. All attendees give a two-minute pitch about their organization.

MEET AND GREETS: Learn how to maximize Chamber membership, hear more about the Chamber and the many ways you can get involved.

PROGRAMS

As champions and advocates of the Erie business community, we know that constantly learning is a crucially important part of owning and operating a business. Finding new information that can help business owners address challenges and enhance existing skills is the best way to ensure business growth and longevity. The Erie Regional Chamber also provides program formats including, but not limited to webinars, in-person seminars, quarterly series, and multi-week courses. The educational programs offered by the Chamber are focused on helping local businesses address stumbling blocks and barriers to growth to ensure a more vibrant economy for years to come.

ERIE AMBASSADORS

Go "behind-the-scenes" at regional companies, tour the community, and experience hidden gems that make Erie a great place to live, work, and play.

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Sharpen your skills during a 12-month professional development opportunity for emerging leaders and career-minded professionals. Program graduates are encouraged and supported in pursuing open positions on regional boards, authorities, and other community-based organizations.



2023 EVENTS CALENDAR

JANUARY

Chamber Meet and Greet Werkshop: An Introduction to Werkberry

FEBUARY

Business and Brewskis Speed Networking Leadership Academy Launch

MARCH

Connect for Coffee Chamber Meet and Greet Erie Ambassadors Kick Off Industry Job Fair

APRIL

CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE - 4/13

Business After Hours Werkshop: Introduction to Werkberry

MAY

Erie Ambassadors Graduation Connect for Coffee Business and Brewskis: Speed Networking

JUNE

ANNUAL MEMBER- GUEST GOLF OUTING – 6/12

Diversity In Action, Session One Industry Job Fair

JULY

8 Great Tuesday Member Appreciation Diversity In Action, Session Two

SEPTEMBER

Chamber Meet and Greet Werkshop: Introduction to Werkberry

OCTOBER

ERIE HOMECOMING - 10/5 & 10/6

NOVEMBER

Diversity in Action Community Career Day Werkshop: Introduction to Werkberry

DECEMBER

ANNUAL MEETING - 12/5

Diversity in Action, Session Three Leadership Academy Graduation







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Thank you to our 2022 track sponsors!

Your engagement with the Erie Regional Chamber created opportunities for Erie's business community to network, learn from subject matter experts, advocate for economic policy for a vibrant economy, and access resources necessary to excel in Erie. Your investment in the chamber is an investment in our community, its people, and Erie's future. Thank you for your commitment to the evolution and progress happening in our hometown.

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