

## **Economic Activity – May 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025**

### New Business Activity

- BIBIBOP Asian Grill opened on May 22<sup>nd</sup> in the former Chipotle space at 429 East Main Street. A ribbon cutting was held the same day. BIBIBOP offers healthy Asian bowls and salads, with a format similar to Chipotle with Korean influences and flavors.
- A nail spa has leased the last remaining space in the Pho King Plaza at 1627 East Main Street. Plans have been submitted to the Building Department, and comments from the initial review have been sent back to the applicant.
- Madcap, located at 1510 Mogadore Road, permanently closed on July 6<sup>th</sup>. The building was purchased, and a company from Akron will be relocating two of its food manufacturing businesses to the space. Additionally, LeeAngelos has signed a lease for the former Wings Sport space in University Plaza. A ribbon cutting has been scheduled for LeeAngelos on November 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Gigi's Ristorante and Market, a new Italian restaurant concept from the Chagrin Falls based Taproot Hospitality Group, leased the former Bricco space in College Town Kent. Renovations of the property are underway, with an anticipated opening in the winter. Gigi's will offer Italian cuisine at an affordable price point, as well as retail wine, cheese, and pre-made meal options from it's Market.
- Kent Automation, the machine shop at 449 Dodge Street, sold earlier this year. The new owner relocated from Columbus to run the business. All employees were retained, and there are plans for future growth.
- The owner of Sue Nelson Designs Ltd, at 156 South Water Street, is retiring. A portion of the building has been leased to For The Birds And More, a retail oddity shop that offers artistic products and classes, which is relocating from Ravenna.
- 124 South Water Street, previously Firefly Hookah Bar, has sold. The new owner plans to convert the property into an event center.
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car purchased the former Longhitanos at 1225 West Main Street. Currently leasing space across the street, Enterprise plans on consolidating its Kent and Hudson location into one at 1225 West Main Street after renovations are complete.
- Teed Off Golf, a new golf simulator business concept, has signed a lease for the former Boost Mobile space in the Marc's Plaza at 1600 South Water Street. The business will have two golf simulator bays, and a winter opening is anticipated.
- Sheetz, at 600 North Mantua Street, is being reconstructed to align with a new layout.
- The owner of Silver and Scents lost her space in Ravenna after the building was sold to a new owner. I assisted her with finding space in Kent, and she was able to sign a lease for 201B East Erie Street. Silver and Scents bills itself as the "original hippie boutique and crystal shop".
- Primal Screen, the screen printing and embroidery company at 1021 Mason Avenue, was recently acquired by a local couple upon the owner's retirement. The new owner's have retained all staff and plan to grow the business.

- The vape shop in the Acme Plaza at 1709 State Route in the Franklin-Kent JEDD, has closed. Geauga vision has leased the space, which is in the process of being renovated.
- Aarons Rent To Own, located at 1850 State Route 59 in the Franklin-Kent JEDD, has closed. The building has been sold to Flynn's Tire and Auto Service, which plans to relocate from its current location across the street at 1897 SR 59.
- Brimfield Town Centre Plaza, located at 4064 State Route 43, sold at auction. The new owner has been making updates to attract new tenants. Both Wing Warehouse, and The Ornament Factory, have signed leases.

#### Updates on Existing Projects

- Main Street Memorabilia opened its brick-and-mortar location at 163 East Main Street. Specializing in sports, music, and entertainment collectibles, the store also serves as the new day-to-day box office for the Kent Stage.
- Construction has started on the new Klaben Lincoln dealership at 1238 West Main Street.
- Maddalena's, the new Italian restaurant at 252 North Water Street, opened its doors in May with a soft opening. Menu offerings include hand crafted cocktails, wood fired pizzas, pasta, and homemade gelato.
- Construction of Rascal House, the fast casual restaurant planned for 1630 East Main Street, is on hold until Spring of 2026.
- Progress continues on the following projects:
  - Shah's Halal Food
  - Domino's Pizza
  - ThunderStruck Donuts
  - Gulf Station renovation
  - The Hasawi Building

#### Other Business Activity

- Discount Drug Mart, located at 1763 East Main Street, will be closing at the end of this year and relocating to a new building on State Route 43 in the Brimfield-Kent JEDD. I have been in contact with the building owners and have the property listed on ZoomProspector.
- I assisted Susan Hazel Rich in finding a new location for her business, Hazelmade, which moved from the Sanford Building at 154 North Water Street, to the former Century 21 offices at 548 South Water Street. The office is used for product design and has a small order fulfillment component.
- Cass McKay has leased a majority her retail space at McKay Bricker, 141 East Main Street, to Leaf Home and Blooms of Akron. She plans to continue custom framing as she eases into retirement.
- Eric Does Data closed its office location at 275 Martinel. The business continues to operate remotely.
- Lightly Toasted, the vape shop at 247 North Water Street, has closed.

- The owner of Pyramid Mold & Machine at 222 Martinel Drive retired and closed the business. There is interest in the building, and I, along with the PDB, have been working with a local company who currently leases space that has interest in purchasing the building.
- The Nut House Pub & Grille has taken over the lease for 295 South Water Street from Panini's.
- I am working with three different businesses interested in using the City's Revolving Loan Fund Program. If approved by the Loan Review Committee, these loans will assist with the acquisition of property and new equipment, for which the loan recipient will commit to retaining and creating additional jobs.

#### Meetings Attended/Outreach

- BREP Visits Attended
  - Land O'Lakes on May 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - Ametek on May 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - Steinert Industries on June 11<sup>th</sup>.
  - Atmos (Crowley Tar) on June 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - HelixCo on July 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - Ron-Al Mold and Machine on July 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - Beemer Machine on July 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - KAPCO on July 17<sup>th</sup>.
  - Kent Elastomers on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Copen Machine on August 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - Sorbothane on August 20<sup>th</sup>.
  - Sportsguard on August 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - Colonial Machine on September 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - Polymerics on September 11<sup>th</sup>.
  - MRF Machine on September 17<sup>th</sup>.
  - Primal Screen on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Oldstrad Engineering on October 7<sup>th</sup>.
  - Furukawa Rock Drill on October 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Meetings/Other
  - Attended multiple MSK, KACC, DKCVB, PDB, KSS, KSURC, and Team NEO meetings.
  - Attended a Kent State University Marketing class presentation on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Franklin JEDD Meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - Assisted with the KACC Business Ignite workshop with Susan McGann from the Akron Small Business Development Center on May 6<sup>th</sup>.
  - Attended the Six District Compact Culinary Arts and Hospitality Studies Advisory Committee meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

- Participated in a planning meeting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hero's Ruck with representatives from the Kent American Legion, PARTA, KACC, and KSU on May 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting between Bent Tree Coffee, Team NEO, and the PDB to discuss the Small Business Grant on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Bent Tree Coffee was ultimately awarded a Small Business Grant which was used to purchase new equipment for the manufacturing side of the business. Bent Tree also committed to creating an additional full-time position.
- Represented the DKCVB at the 2025 Ohio Tourism Day at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus on May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Participated in a discussion about the Small Business Grant with the new owner of Kent Automation, Team NEO, and the PDB on May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Participated in the first Downtown Business Meet Up on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The Downtown Business Meet Up is a collaborative program between MSK and the KACC to bring local businesses together to share information and encourage collaboration.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting with Brad McKay and the owners of Taco Tontos, Rays Place, and Erie Street Kitchen, to discuss the placement and planting of new trees, and repairs in the right-of-way on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Shared follow-up information with business owners within the footprint of the work that were unable to attend the meeting.
- Attended the Beware of the Leopard ribbon cutting on May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the Bibibop ribbon cutting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Participated in the Memorial Day parade with the KACC on May 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended a webinar on Trade, Tariffs and Economic Development on May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Participated in a KSU Homecoming Parade meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Assisted with CREW's (Commercial Real Estate Women) first bus tour of the City of Kent on June 4<sup>th</sup>. CREW toured Davey Tree, Kent City Hall, and the Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship.
- Attended the International Town and Gown Conference on June 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Assisted MSK with the Art and Wine Festival on June 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting with the new owners of 1510 Mogadore Road (former Madcap) and the PDB to discuss incentive programs on June 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the Stricklands ribbon cutting on June 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Discussed available properties with an individual interested in opening a restaurant on June 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended a planning meeting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hero's Ruck on June 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the Game Day Coffee and Kent Tattoo ribbon cuttings on June 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting with the new owners of Primal Screen, Team NEO, and the PDB to discuss the Small Business Grant on June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Assisted with Heritage Fest and tours of City Hall on July 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Met with the owners of Tee'd Off Golf and Susan McGann of the Akron Small Business Development Center to discuss the business on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

- Assisted MSK with the set up for Wizardly on July 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Met with Jamie Reamer and Susan McGann to discuss Jamie's acquisition of the Franklin Square Delio on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting between Hazelmade, Team NEO, and the PDB to discuss the Small Business Grant on July 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting between Jamie Reamer and the Community Development Department to discuss the City's Revolving Loan Fund program on July 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Franklin JEDD and Brimfield JEDD meetings on July 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Participated in a meeting with the owners of Laziza and the KACC on August 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended a planning meeting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hero's Ruck on August 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Franklin JEDD Special Meeting to vote on Income Tax Agreement on August 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting between Copen Machine, Team NEO, and the PDB to discuss the Small Business Grant on August 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the Davey SEED Campus ribbon cutting on August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Assisted MSK with KSU's Flashes First Friday event on August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Discussed available sites for a vintage clothing and record business with Ben Hyle on August 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended a meeting with MSK, KACC, and Aviad Israeli from KSU to discuss identifying local businesses that would be interested in participating in a consulting-based project with KSU senior level students on August 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the Market Stanzas ribbon cutting on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Attended the Scenic Studios ribbon cutting on August 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the PDB Local Government Breakfast on August 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting between Ryan Brannon of Bent Tree Coffee and the Community Development Department to discuss the City's Revolving Loan Fund program on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Attended the Regional CEDS Committee meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Brimfield JEDD Special Meeting to vote on Income Tax Agreement on September 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Met with Prim of Fifth Flavor to discuss incentive programs and locations for a potential brick and mortar location for her food truck business on September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting between MSK and KACC to bring together MSK Small Business Saturday with KACC Festival of Lights on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Attended the Team NEO Site Selection Meeting hosted by NEOMCMA in Brecksville on September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Met virtually with ownership of Enterprise Rent-A-Car to review its CRA application on September 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the Six District Compact Culinary Arts and Hospitality Studies Advisory Committee meeting on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Participated in a planning meeting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hero's Ruck with representatives from the Kent American Legion, PARTA, KACC, and KSU on October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting with Carla Wyckoff, Dom Bollenbacher, and Jon Gianquinto to discuss producing a promotional video for businesses whose ingress/egress is directly impacted by the East Main Street project on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Participated in the KSU Homecoming Parade with KACC on October 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Met virtually with a group interested in space to produce concrete panels for residential construction on October 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended the Heritage Ohio Annual Conference Economic Vitality in Action seminar in Canton on October 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Met with a business owner interested in purchasing a property on North Water Street and discussed the City's Revolving Loan Fund program on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting between Metis Construction, Team NEO, and PDB to discuss incentive programs on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Facilitated and participated in a meeting between a business owner interested in opening a new business and others from the Community Development Department to discuss zoning on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Attended the MSK/KACC Downtown Business Meet Up on October 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Franklin JEDD meeting on October 29<sup>th</sup>.