

May 2026

Newsletter



KANSAI HELIOS Officially Opens Manufacturing Facility in Johnstown



KANSAI HELIOS, a member of the international KANSAI PAINT Group, has officially opened its newest production facility in Johnstown, marking a significant expansion of its North American operations. GROW Licking County Executive Director Cameron Garczyk and several GROW board members were on hand during their celebration event on April 30th.

The 135,000-square-foot facility is dedicated to powder coatings and will serve as a central hub for key automotive and industrial markets across the region. Through a \$20 million investment, the site is expected to quadruple the company's production capacity, enhancing its ability to deliver specialized coating solutions with increased flexibility and efficiency.

"With this move, we're not just expanding—we're taking a giant leap," said Bastian Krauss, president and CEO of the KANSAI HELIOS Group. "The new facility will serve as a cornerstone of our future in North America."

In addition to expanding production capabilities, the company emphasized its commitment to workforce development in the region. "Our goal is to build a highly skilled local workforce that reflects the values and excellence of our global organization," Krauss added.

The investment strengthens KANSAI HELIOS' footprint in North America, expands its expert network, and accelerates delivery of industrial powder coatings across the United States. The company is set to employ nearly 50 people within the next few years.

[Learn More](#)

Illuminate USA Announces New CEO



Illuminate USA has announced that its Board of Directors has appointed Art Fletcher as the company's next CEO. Fletcher succeeds former CEO Frank Zhu and brings nearly two decades of senior leadership experience from Illuminate USA's parent company, Invenergy. Fletcher previously served on Illuminate USA's Board and will remain on the Board as part of his new role.

Throughout his career, Fletcher has been closely involved in advancing complex energy infrastructure projects, building high-performing teams, and driving operational excellence with safety, precision, and reliability. His experience positions him to continue advancing Illuminate USA's role as leader in the domestic solar manufacturing industry.

"It's clear domestic manufacturing is a critical component of energy security, and I'm looking forward to formally joining Illuminate USA as we continue to deliver for customers and scale our manufacturing capabilities," said Fletcher.

Zhu led Illuminate USA since its founding in 2023, driving substantial growth as the company became the largest single-site solar panel manufacturing company in North America. "Leading this organization has been the honor of a lifetime, and I look forward to continuing to support the industry through other endeavors," said Zhu. Under Zhu's leadership, Illuminate USA manufactured more than 13 million solar panels, stood up eight production lines, and has grown to employ more than 1,600 associates.

[Learn More](#)

COSI teams with Boeing on "HIVE" Workforce Initiative Launch in Newark



The HIVE (High-Impact Virtual Experiences) initiative was recently launched in Newark as part of a national effort led by COSI – Center of Science and Industry, with support from The Boeing Company, to connect students with hands-on career exploration opportunities. The program is designed to introduce pathways in aerospace, advanced manufacturing, and emerging technologies.

The HIVE is designed to strengthen alignment between early STEM engagement and workforce opportunity by bringing career exploration directly into schools and communities. Each activation is intentionally located in regions where Boeing and its supplier network actively operate and hire, ensuring that the career paths students experience are relevant to their local economies. By connecting hands-on learning with real employment landscapes, The HIVE helps students better understand how their interests can translate into future roles within their own communities.

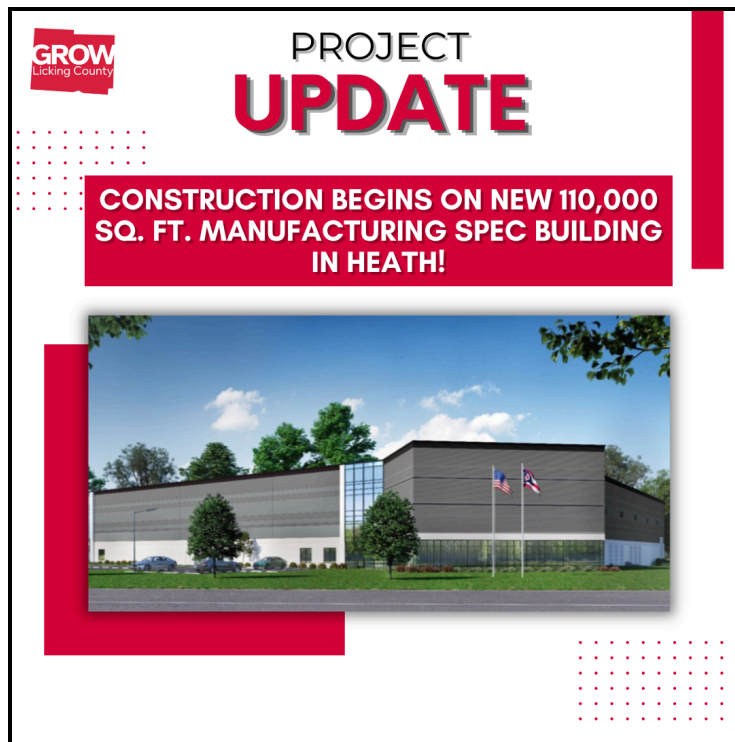
Boeing Heath Manufacturing Senior Program Manager Gretchen Dildine emphasized the importance of early exposure to STEM experiences during the event.

“I’ve seen firsthand how a single, meaningful experience in science can change somebody’s viewpoint,” Dildine said. “Sparking that curiosity and confidence in the decision to pursue a technical career—that’s the kind of transformation that we’re looking for here.”

Boeing maintains a strong presence in Licking County through its facility at the Central Ohio Aerospace and Technology Center, located on the Licking County Port Authority campus in Heath.

[Learn More](#)

Southgate Corporation Announces New \$13.5 million, 110,000 sq. ft. Industrial Building in Heath



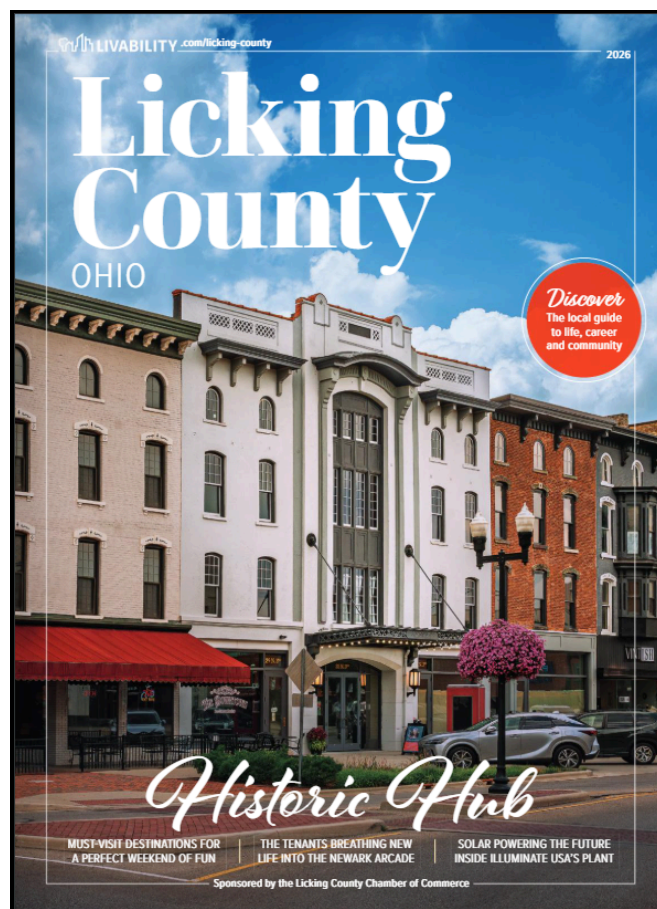
Southgate Corporation has begun work on a new \$13.5 million, 110,000 sq. ft. speculative industrial building at the Central Ohio Aerospace & Technology Center (COATC) in Heath. Designed for manufacturing use, this facility will be move-in ready later this year, helping meet the rising demand from manufacturers looking to expand in our region.

According to Southgate’s President Robert O’Neill “Central Ohio offers a superb location for manufacturing and Licking County offers an excellent workforce. The Licking County manufacturing economy continues to expand and for these reasons, Southgate is building a new spec manufacturing building.”

“Now is a time when manufacturing companies are more optimistic about expansion and growth going forward so we want to have a location ready to go for a company looking for a new facility” according to O’Neill.

With direct access to I-70 & St. Rt 79, strong utility infrastructure, and a growing cluster of major employers, this project is another sign of the strength of Licking County’s economy. The 16.5-acre site was made possible through a partnership between the City of Heath, the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority, and Southgate Corporation.

Licking County Chamber of Commerce Releases 2026 Livability Licking County Magazine



Check out the newly released 2026 edition of Livability Licking County, presented by the Licking County Chamber of Commerce. The magazine showcases the vibrant communities, thriving businesses, and incredible people that make Licking County such a great place to call home.

Take a look and see what makes our county stand out!

[Click Here to View](#)

2026 C-TEC Jill of All Trades Event is June 9th



The poster for the 2026 C-TEC Jill of All Trades event features a blue and white color scheme with orange accents. At the top left, the logo reads 'JILL OF ALL TRADES A DAY FOR WOMEN'. To the right, it says 'Career & Technology Education Centers Licking County'. The main title 'JILL OF ALL TRADES™' is prominently displayed. Below it, the date 'Tuesday June 9th.' is listed, followed by a description: 'A day-long event to inspire young women, grades 9 - 12 to consider careers in the skilled trades.' A red banner at the bottom left states 'EVENT IS FREE'. A blue button with a white QR code says 'REGISTER NOW!'. At the bottom, the website 'www.c-tec.edu' and address '150 Price Rd, Newark OH' are provided, along with the registration deadline: 'Registration deadline is Friday, May 22nd'. Two circular inset images show a woman working with a drill and another woman working on a wooden board.

The third year of C-TEC's Jill of All Trades event takes place on June 9th. The immersive event continues to be a valuable workforce development initiative for our region, helping young ladies explore high demand career pathways in fields such as construction, manufacturing, public safety, and other technical trades, many of which directly align with the workforce needs of our local employers. GROW Licking County is proud to be a sponsor of the event along with many Licking County businesses and organizations.

[Student Registration Form](#)

May Investor Spotlight



TrueCore Federal Credit Union

TrueCore Federal Credit Union's roots trace back to 1940, when employees at Owens Corning's Newark plant came together to form Fiberglas Federal Credit Union, providing a trusted, community-focused financial resource during a time of economic uncertainty.

Over the decades, the organization has grown to serve a broader region, officially becoming TrueCore Federal Credit Union in 2015 following a merger and expanded community focus. Today, TrueCore serves members across five counties in Central Ohio, continuing its mission as a member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative. In 2022, TrueCore received approval for a community charter expansion. This allows TrueCore to serve individuals who live, work, worship, attend school, or volunteer in:

- Licking County
- Fairfield County
- Knox County
- Muskingum County
- Perry County

Built on the core values of integrity, innovation, service, and community, TrueCore remains committed to helping individuals and families improve their financial well-being, while reinvesting in the communities it serves.

[TrueCore Website](#)

[View Our Current Investors!](#)

If you are interested in becoming an investor of GROW Licking County or want to learn more, contact Cameron Garczyk at Cameron@growlickingcounty.org.

Check out our available buildings and sites!

The GROW Licking County team provides site selection services to professional consultants and business executives considering expanding or relocating to Licking County communities.



[View Properties](#)

Did You Know?

Did you know? Licking County has the 3rd most municipalities (16) of counties in the Central Ohio Region and is tied for 2nd in number of cities (6).

Investors & Partners

Platinum Investors



Gold Investors



Silver Investors

- OhioMeansJobs Licking County
- Licking County Chamber of Commerce
- Village of Granville
- MedBen
- Huntington National Bank
- Vorys, Sater, Seymour & Pease LLP
- TruCore Federal Credit Union
- C-TEC
- Denison University
- Shai Hess Commercial Real Estate
- Southgate Corporation

Bronze Investors

- Pataskala Area Chamber of Commerce
- Granville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Buckeye Lake Region Corp
- Power Connect
- Terracon
- Verdantas
- ADR
- American Structurepoint
- Bricker Graydon Wyatt
- Legat Architects
- Wilson, Shannon & Snow
- Monroe Township
- Union Township
- Granville Township
- Matesich Distributing Co
- MPW
- North Valley Bank
- AEP Ohio
- OPUS
- Project Architecture LTD. Project Construction
- Reese Pyle Meyer PLL



[Our Company](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

GROW Licking County | 20 S. 2nd Street 4th Floor | Newark, OH 43055 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!