



# Newsletter

February 6th, 2026



**LOOKING FOR MEMBER  
ANNOUNCEMENTS?  
CLICK HERE!**

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# Strategic Partnership Announced

Erie County Commissioners, Shores & Islands Ohio (S&IO), the Erie County Visitors and Convention Bureau (ECVCB), and the Greater Sandusky Partnership (GSP) announced a new strategic partnership to better align regional promotion and development, strengthen public-private collaboration, and ensure transparent and responsible stewardship of local lodging tax revenues.

Building on more than 20 years of joint marketing under the Shores & Islands destination brand for Erie and Ottawa Counties, which has driven tourism growth and increased lodging tax revenue, this effort will align resources to further strengthen the destination economy.

The Erie County Commissioners will enter into a new five-year agreement with the ECVCB. GSP will provide management services for ECVCB and S&IO and will continue discussions with Ottawa County Visitors Bureau (OCVB) about entering into a similar agreement. A regional S&IO Board will continue to guide joint marketing efforts in Erie and Ottawa County.

[Continue reading >>>>](#)

**Questions?**

[Read our Q&A](#)



**SHORES &  
ISLANDS  
OHIO**



# FROM THE CEO



## Shared Responsibility to an Incredible Region

*Eric Wobser | CEO, Greater Sandusky Partnership*

Earlier this week, I was driving across the Edison Bridge while on my way to a routine business meeting. I saw a Bald Eagle and was surrounded by water in every direction. I wondered to myself how often I have taken something like that for granted, and how few people get to live and work in a region with as much natural beauty and resources as Greater Sandusky and the Shores and Islands.

We sit within 500 miles of over 60% of the population of the United States and Canada. We live on Lake Erie, one of largest lakes in the world, which also happens to be the home of more freshwater fish and boats than anywhere else on the Great Lakes. We are also home to an amazing collection of islands, the best seasonal amusement park and one of largest indoor water parks in the world. Millions of people and billions of dollars flow into our region every year to take advantage of what we enjoy every day.

Our region has unique assets, and a changing world provides us with unique opportunities for growth. Access to affordable fresh water is increasingly at a premium. High cost of living on the East and West Coast is driving people back to the heart of the country. The Big Ten has won the last three national championships in college football. There are signs that over the next generation we will have the best opportunity in decades for the Great Lakes region to thrive.

In spite of these tailwinds, we cannot take the revitalization of our region for granted. Like much of the Midwest, our region suffers from a decrease in birth rates and a shrinking workforce population. To rebuild our workforce and population we will need to focus on creating affordable and available housing. While our Destination Economy gives us a major advantage over most midwestern communities, we badly need to diversify our regional economy and to attract year-round employment and investment.

Loving this region means being honest about those challenges and addressing them together. Building on our competitive advantages will also require proactive leadership and collaboration. What we do collectively over the next generation will determine whether we are a leader in transforming our region or fall victim to the same demographic trends facing nearly every small city and rural community in Ohio.

This responsibility and opportunity are at the heart of the Greater Sandusky Partnership's new collaboration with Shores & Islands Ohio. Together, we can scale resources to more comprehensively promote, engage and develop our region to attract talent, grow business, and strengthen our communities.

When we work together across sectors, great things happen. Our goal is simple: to ensure this extraordinary place remains not only a destination people love to visit, but a place where people can live, work, and invest with confidence. We are stronger together.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## February 11th Coffee & Connection with William Rutger

Sandusky Library  
9:30 - 11:00 am

[REGISTER](#)



## February 18th MEMBER WEBINAR: Hire & Engage Interns

1:00 - 2:00 pm

[REGISTER](#)



## February 20th Work Space THINK TANK: Personal Branding

Work Space Sandusky  
9:00 - 10:00 am

[REGISTER](#)

[MORE EVENTS](#)

# MEMBER UPDATES



## MEMBER ORIENTATION

We had our first member orientation of the year at Gathering Grounds Coffee House in Huron (Thank you Lea and Team!).

We discussed upcoming programs, member benefits and resources available to get started.

### Couldn't make the event?

Contact Patrick Shepherd at [patrick@greatersandusky.com](mailto:patrick@greatersandusky.com) anytime with questions

## GET TO KNOW YOUR MEMBER CENTER

As a member of Greater Sandusky Partnership, you can share events, post job opportunities, celebrate big wins with the community, and offer deals and discounts.

You can do it all in one place – the GSP Member Center. Log in to get started.

We created a guide to help you navigate the GSP Member Center. Check it out if you have questions!



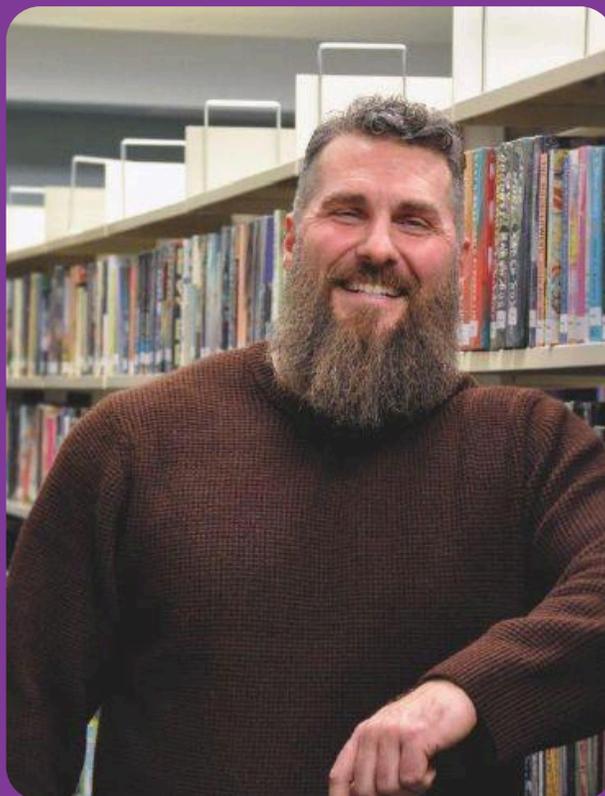


## LAST CHANCE! REGISTER NOW!

### *Coffee & Connection* *Feat. William Rutger, Executive* *Director of Sandusky Library*

A lifelong public servant, William began his library career in 1996 as a student Page at Sandusky Library. Over the years, he has worked in both academic and public libraries, including Bowling Green State University Firelands, before serving as Director of the Milan-Berlin Library District, Ashland Public Library, and Avon Lake Public Library.

[REGISTER NOW >>>](#)



## MEMBER WEBINAR

### *A Tax-Savvy Succession Plan* *Explore Employee Ownership*

Succession planning starts with understanding what's right for your business. Join Greg Daugherty of Porter Wright for a practical overview of Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) and why they are becoming an increasingly popular, tax-advantaged option for business owners that offers ownership options for employees.

[REGISTER NOW >>>](#)

# TALENT ENGAGEMENT

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**YP WEEK 2026**  
**July 27th - August 1st**

Produced by North Coast Young Professionals, YP Week highlights the energy and potential of the region's emerging leaders while showcasing the amenities, institutions, and culture that make this an ideal place for young professionals to live, work, and grow.



## HIRING SUMMER INTERNS? DON'T DO IT ALONE!

Join GSP for a webinar focused on the programs and platforms available to help employers recruit interns and keep them engaged in the community.

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 18

**TIME:** 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

**[REGISTER NOW >>>](#)**



# PROGRAMMING & PLACEMAKING



**One Month Until**

# Sandusky

**RESTAURANT WEEK**

**MARCH 5-15, 2026**



Save the date! Sandusky Restaurant Week is returning March 5 - 15<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned for the list of participating restaurants!

*Would you like to Sponsor Restaurant Week? [CLICK HERE >>>](#)*



## STRONGMAN ON AMAZON PRIME

Strongman Champions League USA streaming on Amazon Prime Video, showcasing the league's powerful two-day debut in Northwest Ohio.

The first two episodes feature Day 1 in Toledo and Day 2 in Sandusky, where thousands of spectators packed the Lake Erie waterfront to witness a world-class showdown between some of the top international strongmen from USA, Europe, Africa and more.

[Watch here >>>>](#)



## HURON LAKE FRONT MARKET

Huron Lake Front Market will return this summer! **Vendor's, please submit your application by March 1st!**

For more information on becoming a vendor, please email Rachael Summerfield at [rsummerfield@greatersandusky.com](mailto:rsummerfield@greatersandusky.com)

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

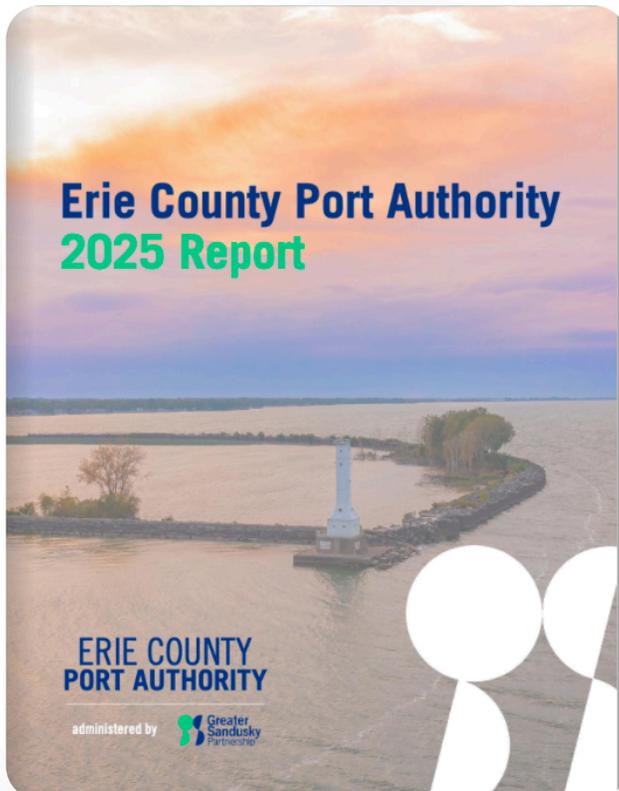


## Regional Housing Symposium

The GSP Regional Housing Symposium convened nearly 150 public, private and nonprofit leaders to examine housing needs and opportunities across the region.

A central feature of the symposium was an unveiling of the GSP Residential Development Strategic Plan which outlines a series of actionable strategies aimed at addressing the region's need for units.

[Read more about it here](#)



## 2025 ECPA REPORT RELEASED

Read what the Erie County Port Authority accomplished in 2025 from total capital invested, jobs created and dollars funneled back into the community through our partners.

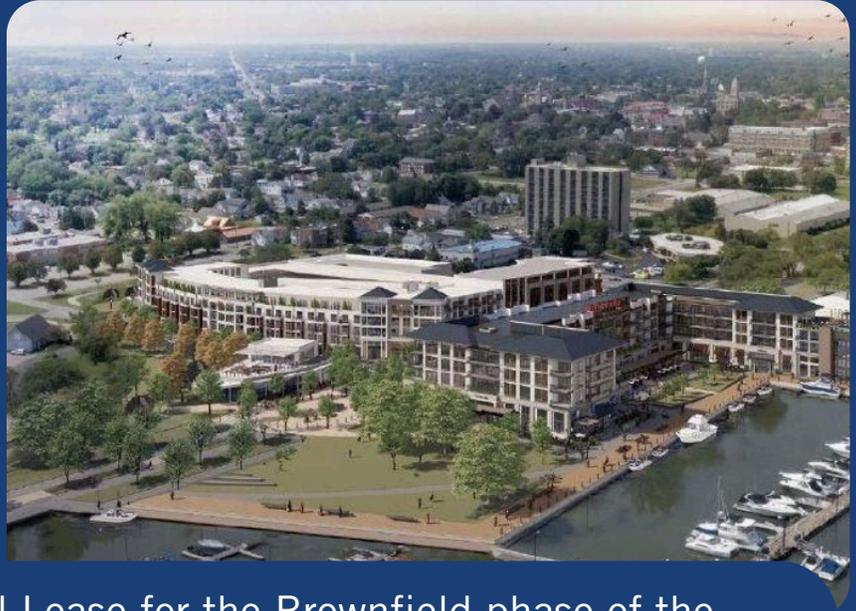
[Read the Report Here >>>](#)

The Erie County Port Authority is administered by Greater Sandusky Partnership. If you would like to learn more, contact GSP at [info@greatersandusky.com](mailto:info@greatersandusky.com).



## PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE

The following three projects will result in nearly **\$42M in capital investment, \$800K in company savings, 38 new jobs and 144 new housing units** in the region.



### 1 Battery Park

The ECPA approved a Capital Lease for the Brownfield phase of the Battery Park Project, a development led by Marous Development Group, which encompasses site preparation, demolition and environmental remediation. This project will be a redevelopment of a 30 acre property.

### 2 Mudbrook

The Huron Joint Port Authority (HJPA) approved a Capital Lease for a multi-family residential development in Huron Township. The project is estimated to result in \$26M capital investment and the creation of 144 units of new rental housing and 3 permanent full-time jobs.

### 3 Manufacturing Facility Expansion

The ECPA approved a Capital Lease to support a major manufacturing expansion in Norwalk, OH. The total project cost is estimated at more than \$6M and will result in the addition of nearly 68K SqFt to the existing facility. The project is estimated to create 35 new jobs and retain 90 existing positions.

# GRANT OPPORTUNITY!

## SHORES & ISLANDS OHIO



### 2026 DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AVAILABLE IN ERIE AND OTTAWA COUNTIES



Shores & Islands Ohio is now accepting applications for its 2026 Destination Development Grant Program. Projects should focus on improving amenities, attractions, and facilities, fostering connections between residents and visitors, and aligning with S&IO's mission and strategic goals.

New this year, grant applicants are required to attend an informational meeting before they are allowed to apply. There will be a virtual option for those who cannot attend in-person. If unable to participate in any of the sessions, the applicant must schedule a one-on-one review with Amanda Smith Rasnick before applying.

Email [amanda@shoresandislands.com](mailto:amanda@shoresandislands.com) with questions regarding the info sessions or to schedule a personal review.

Applications are due February 25, 2026, with award meetings scheduled April 1–3 and April 6–8.

[CLICK TO LEARN MORE](#)

*Thank You*

**NEW & RENEWED MEMBERS!**



TURF REHAB



EXECUTIVE CLEANERS

BARNHART BUILDERS LTD





**LOOKING FOR MEMBER  
ANNOUNCEMENTS?  
CLICK HERE!**



**604 W Washington, Suite 1  
Sandusky, Ohio 44870**

**[greater sandusky.com](http://greater sandusky.com)  
[info@greater sandusky.com](mailto:info@greater sandusky.com)  
419-625-6421**



# GSP Member & Community Events, Announcements and Updates

February 6, 2026

## ***Member Newsletter Submissions***

Member updates will be shared through our monthly newsletter. Member events can also be found on our website on the [Community Calendar](#).

***Members, please note***, if you have an addition to the newsletter, it should be 8.5"x11" and shared as either a png, jpg or PDF file. Newsletters will be sent monthly. Please send your flyers to Alissa Fisher, Director of Marketing, at [afisher@greatersandusky.com](mailto:afisher@greatersandusky.com).

Not yet a member? Join GSP today as a [Business Member](#), [Community Partner](#), [Individual Member](#) or [NCYP Member](#)!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MEMBER APPLICATION



[greatersandusky.com](http://greatersandusky.com)  
[info@greatersandusky.com](mailto:info@greatersandusky.com)  
419-625-6421



## **New Business–Child Care Partnership Supports Workforce Stability**

A new partnership including My Faith Learning Center, and Firelands Region employers is offering local employers an innovative way to support their workforce through dependable child care.

Launched with support from the Ohio Department of Children and Youth Early Care and Education Business Partnership Grant and administered locally through the Child Care Resource Center (CCRC), the My Faith Preferred Employer Program allows businesses to invest directly in child care solutions for their employees with the help of grant funds awarded by the state of Ohio.

Participating employers can reserve guaranteed child care slots (for future use) or contribute a flat amount or percentage toward employee tuition. These investments in year one of the grant are matched at 75% of the investment and 25% in the second year to help working parents stay engaged in the workforce while giving employers a competitive edge in recruitment, retention, and productivity.

The program rolled out in Fall 2025 and is available for employers to participate in today. To meet demand, My Faith Learning Center is funded to iness Partnershipopen three additional classrooms and expand staffing to serve infants, preschoolers, and school-age children to meet the needs of the employees in need of quality care arrangements.

“This partnership aligns business needs with real workforce solutions,” says Jennifer Dodge, CCRC Executive Director. “Reliable child care reduces absenteeism, supports employee stability, and strengthens the local economy.”

Designed as a sustainable, scalable model, the program will track outcomes and share data to encourage additional employer participation across the region.

📌 Interested in becoming a business partner or learning more?

Contact the Child Care Resource Center to explore how your organization can participate:  
Jennifer Dodge [jdodge@ccrcinc.com](mailto:jdodge@ccrcinc.com) or 440-242-0413 ext. \*231

# TROUBLE AFFORDING CHILD CARE?

## The Erie County Tuition Assistance Program Can Help!!

Covers licensed & unlicensed care

Must meet 2 of these:  
1. Live in Erie County  
2. Work in Erie County  
3. Child care is in Erie County

Funds granted for up to one year

For children 6wks-12 years of age

Receive 1:1 support from CCRC Specialist

Employers can contribute to help employees succeed!

### Is My Family Eligible?

#### Family Size:



#### Income Limit:

\$2,383/month

\$3,004/month

\$3,625/month

\$4,247/month



*\*Made possible through the Dorn Foundation, Mylander Foundation, and supported by the Erie County Community Foundation.\**

Apply Now!

Questions? Contact Tiffany Felter:  
440-242-0413 ext. \*251 or  
tfelter@ccrcinc.com

  
**child care**  
RESOURCE CENTER

# SANDUSKY

PUBLIC ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

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**CALL FOR ARTISTS**  
WHEELS PARK **MURAL**



**CALL FOR ARTISTS**  
WHEELS PARK **SCULPTURE**





## **YOUR CLOTHES ARE OUR PROFESSION**

**WRINKLE FREE** ✓

**STAIN REMOVAL** ✓

**INCREASED LONGEVITY** ✓

**DELIVERY** ✓

## **Corporate Offerings**

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**Scheduled Pickup-Drop Off**

**Corporate Base Discounts**

**\* Priority Turn Around**

**Dedicated Account Manager**



**Start your corporate account today!**

**Contact: Edmond Hoty**

**419-656-0602**

**\*Additional Cost**

# Lunch *Break.*

SANDUSKY BAY CITY LIFESTYLE | HAILEE SAGE



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The  
*Details.*

Thursday February 12<sup>th</sup> 2026  
11:00am - 12:00pm  
Work Space  
1521 East Perkins Ave, Sandusky

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TO RSVP TEXT 419-202-5886 OR  
EMAIL [HAILEE.SAGE@CITYLIFESTYLE.COM](mailto:HAILEE.SAGE@CITYLIFESTYLE.COM)

**SANDUSKY BAY**  
CITY LIFESTYLE™

# From *Seen* to Chosen.

SANDUSKY BAY CITY LIFESTYLE | HAILEE SAGE

I'm Hailee Sage, Publisher of Sandusky Bay City Lifestyle, and I'd love to invite you to a Lunch *Break* conversation about our hyper-local, luxury publication.

**This Lunch *Break* is an inside look at:**

- Your publisher: who, what and why
- Building trust and credibility in the community
- Staying visible year-round
- Being top of mind with the right costumers

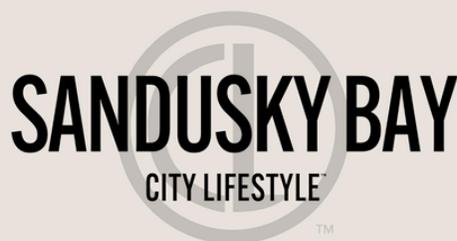
It's a conversation about alignment and brand presence in the community. We aren't just printing a magazine. We're building a trusted platform where local brands are seen with intention, found by the right audience and ultimately chosen in a crowded market.

---

You've seen us. Now, see the results. An Exclusive Lunch *Break* with Sandusky Bay City Lifestyle.

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TO RSVP TEXT 419-202-5886 OR  
EMAIL [HAILEE.SAGE@CITYLIFESTYLE.COM](mailto:HAILEE.SAGE@CITYLIFESTYLE.COM)



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 29, 2026

Contact:

Heather Gilchrist

Assistant Vice President of Marketing

419-625-9025, ext. 1342 or Hgilchrist@vlfcu.org

[www.vlfcu.org](http://www.vlfcu.org)



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## VacationLand Federal Credit Union Receives Approval for Field of Membership Expansion

(SANDUSKY, OH) (January 29, 2026) VacationLand Federal Credit Union is pleased to announce that it has received official approval from the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) to expand its field of membership. This strategic enhancement allows the credit union to extend its financial services to Lorain, Ottawa, and Sandusky counties.

With this expansion, VacationLand Federal Credit Union can now offer its full suite of financial products and services—including checking and savings accounts, loans, digital banking solutions, and financial education resources—to thousands of new potential members.

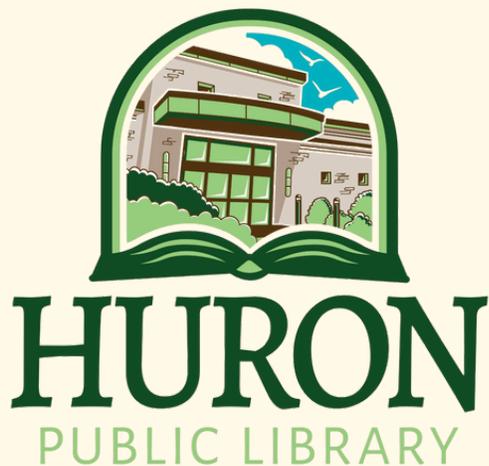
“Expanding our field of membership is a milestone that reflects the strength of our cooperative spirit. We could not have achieved this without the unwavering support of our members, the dedication of our employees, and the trust of the communities we proudly serve. Together, we are opening the door to greater opportunity and a stronger financial future for all,” said Bryan Myers, CEO.

The newly approved expansion aligns with the credit union’s mission to be their members’ chosen lifetime financial partner, improve their communities for future generations by promoting financial well-being, increasing access to affordable financial services, and supporting underserved communities. The credit union has a long history of serving Erie and Huron counties, and this approval marks a significant step in broadening its impact.

### About VacationLand Federal Credit Union

VacationLand Federal Credit Union was established in 1956, serving more than 20,000 members with assets totaling \$320M. As a not-for-profit financial cooperative, the credit union remains committed to providing exceptional service, competitive financial products, and community-focused initiatives. To learn more about membership eligibility, visit [www.vlfcu.org](http://www.vlfcu.org) or call 1-800-691-9299.

###



# UPCOMING DECEMBER COMMUNITY EVENTS

## ALL MONTH LONG ADULT WINTER READING CHALLENGE BLIND DATE WITH A BOOK

9

MON  
FEB

ALL DAY: Take & Make Craft  
11:30am: Mahjong Mondays  
2:45pm: After School Gaming Club

10

TUE  
FEB

11:00am Art Club  
6:00pm Stuffed Animal Sleepover

11

WED  
FEB

5:00pm Rockin' Readers Book Group  
6:30pm Euchre Night

12

THU  
FEB

ALL DAY Teen Cooking Challenge  
6:00pm Huron Community Connections: Polic &  
Fire

**[VIEW ALL PROGRAMS & EVENTS ONLINE!](#)**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Autumn Jose  
Civista Bank  
[arjose@civista.bank](mailto:arjose@civista.bank)  
419.627.4517

## **Mark Sams Promoted to Senior VP, Senior Revenue Officer**

SANDUSKY, OHIO (January 9, 2026) – Civista Bank is pleased to announce the promotion of Mark Sams to Senior Vice President, Senior Revenue Officer.

In his new role, Sams brings 27 years of banking experience and will focus on identifying and advancing revenue opportunities across the bank. He will have direct responsibility for Treasury Management, Private Banking, Wealth Management, Civista@Work, and a new healthcare lending and deposit initiative. He will also assist with other lending business lines as the role evolves to support Civista Bank's continued growth and performance objectives.

"Mark's deep industry experience, strategic mindset, and proven leadership make him exceptionally well-suited for this role," said Bob Katitus, Senior Vice President and Chief Lending Officer. "His ability to identify opportunity and drive growth will be instrumental as we continue to evolve and strengthen our revenue strategy."

### **About Civista Bank**

Founded in 1884, Civista Bank is the community banking subsidiary of Civista Bancshares, Inc., a financial services holding company with assets of \$4.4 billion headquartered in Sandusky, Ohio. Civista Bank provides full-service banking, commercial lending, mortgage, and wealth management services to individuals, businesses, governments, and non-profit entities. Today, Civista operates 44 offices across Ohio, Southeastern Indiana, and Northern Kentucky. Civista Leasing & Finance, a division of Civista Bank offers commercial equipment leasing services for businesses nationwide.

To learn more, visit [civista.bank](http://civista.bank) or follow us on Facebook @CivistaBank, Instagram @Civista\_Bank, and LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/civista-bank>.

###



# VIVA LAS SANDUSKY!

YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN THE WINNING 'HAND'

THE SANDUSKY STATE THEATRE AND CARYL CRANE YOUTH THEATRE ARE BETTING BIG AND GOING ALL IN WITH OUR

## MONTE CARLO SOIRÉE: A NIGHT OF LOVE AND LUCK

FEBRUARY 13, 2026 AT 6:00

AT THE SANDUSKY ELKS

\$100 PER PERSON



### SPONSORED BY:

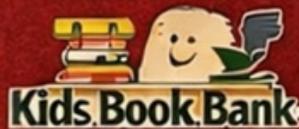
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QUESTIONS? CALL SHERYL CONNER 419-626-1950

<https://ci.ovationtix.com/36775/store/donations/572888>



# HIDDEN ENERGY WASTE

## IN CLINICS, STUDIOS, & FITNESS FACILITIES

Many health and wellness facilities spend more money on energy than necessary, without realizing it.

Common sources of hidden energy waste include:

- HVAC systems running outside operating hours
- Equipment left on when not in use
- Inefficient lighting or outdated controls
- Inflated electric and natural gas supply rates

**The Chamber Energy Program helps identify ways to reduce your supply costs and energy usage without disrupting daily operations.**



**Let us help you uncover hidden energy savings.** Simply visit [www.chamberenergyprogram.com](http://www.chamberenergyprogram.com), fill out the form, and upload a recent copy of your electric and gas bills.

*Savings not guaranteed. Actual savings may vary.*



# LONG-TERM ENERGY COST STABILITY FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS BUSINESSES

## **Are you ready to secure predictable electric and natural gas pricing?**

We'll evaluate the best products for your needs and ensure you're positioned for long-term stability. Energy is one of your largest operating expenses. Let us help you manage it with confidence and control.

The Chamber Energy Program helps health and wellness businesses – **from dentists and orthodontists to gyms and fitness centers** – navigate choices clearly and confidently, at no cost to members.

**Reach out to the Chamber Energy Program today.  
We'll let you know what you're currently paying and if  
you could be paying less.**



**Get your free bill review today** by visiting [www.chamberenergyprogram.com](http://www.chamberenergyprogram.com), filling out the form, and uploading a recent copy of your electric and gas bills.

# WORKspace

SPACE THAT WORKS.

## Speed Volunteering

Connecting Volunteers & Nonprofit Orgs + Programs

**Tuesday, February 24th**, skip the drag of speed dating and join us for Speed Volunteering: A dynamic way to connect local nonprofits and programs with community members looking to give back.

Similar to speed networking, this event will allow potential volunteers to engage in brief, timed conversations with a list of organizations, discovering meaningful ways to get involved and make a difference.

**Registration and networking from 5:00 – 5:30 p.m. with a prompt programming start at 5:30 p.m.**

### WHAT TO EXPECT:

- ★ More than 15 area-organizations set up at booth-like tables
- ★ Up to 5 minutes of conversation with representatives from orgs looking for support through volunteerism
- ★ Staying for the duration of the event to ensure equal conversation amongst all orgs
- ★ Timing of each conversation and rotation by the Team @ Work Space

### Planning to attend?

Scan the QR code or use link below to register as an individual.



1521 E Perkins Avenue, Sandusky, Ohio 44870

**SEE BACK FOR PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS!**

[www.workspacesandusky.com/speed-volunteering-registration](http://www.workspacesandusky.com/speed-volunteering-registration)

# Speed Volunteering

Connecting Volunteers & Nonprofit Orgs + Programs

