Canton, Jackson-Belden Chambers Explore Potential Merger

Exciting work has begun at the Jackson-Belden Chamber of Commerce and the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce. As announced in November, executives and volunteer leaders at both chambers are studying ways that the two organizations could collaborate more extensively for the good of the region’s businesses and the community that the two chambers serve.

That collaboration could result in a merger.

Members of both organizations are probably wondering what this work involves. Here’s a look at the process.

Both chambers have engaged consultant David Ramey of Dayton, president of Strategic Leadership Associates. His firm has expertise in strategic planning and organization for chambers of commerce. Ramey is leading a joint merger study team consisting of about five members each from both the Jackson-Belden and the Canton Regional chambers.

(continued on page nine)

William C. Shivers – Outgoing Chairman’s Message

CANTON REGIONAL CHAMBER’S 2015 BOARD CHAIRMAN

As I reflect upon my role as Chairman of the Board for the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, I am astonished by how quickly the year has passed. The old adage is true… time flies when you’re having fun.

Time also flies when you are engaged in collaborating with a talented and committed team, consisting of President and CEO, Dennis Saunier, his dedicated team, and my fellow Chamber Board of Directors, to cohesively execute upon the objectives outlined in the Chamber’s 5-year strategic plan.

At the beginning of my appointment, we embarked upon the Chamber’s 101st year of servicing 1,600 plus members and the community. Throughout 2015, we made progress on the goals set forth in the strategic plan that align with the Chamber’s Mission to lead the region in business and community development through collaboration and innovation. A few highlights include:

(continued on next page)
OUTGOING MESSAGE

GOAL A: Advance unified regional economic development.
- Conducted three successful oil and gas business seminars and remained active in regional and statewide energy organizations.
- Supported development of the Hall of Fame Village through funding of the Master Plan and impact study and partnered with the Hall of Fame to bid for NFL draft.

GOAL B: Facilitate employers and education institutions.
- Convened City of Canton, Akron-Canton Airport, Chamber, United Way and the Pro Football Hall of Fame to study data needs and a collaborative strategic plan, with the support of Stark Community Foundation, The Repository and Fund for Our Economic Future.

GOAL C: Support the development of the Canton urban core.
- Assisted City of Canton with development of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Created connection to Hall of Fame Village through Market Square development, Fulton Road improvements and the “Eleven” art pieces.
- Added 10 new businesses in downtown.

GOAL D: Advocate for regional travel industry infrastructure.
- Rebranded the Canton/Stark County Convention and Visitors’ Bureau to Visit Canton to capitalize on the changing travel and tourism landscape of the region, including a new website: VisitCanton.com.
- Partnered with Visit Canton to help fund the feasibility study and economic impact study for the Pro Football Hall of Fame village project.
- Worked with Visit Canton to establish them as an independent organization beginning January 1, 2016. The new Visit Canton will continue to reside at the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce and share select services with the Chamber.

GOAL E: Create a public policy advocacy voice for the region.
- Worked with Metro Chambers of Ohio colleagues to protect business interests in the state budget process by: Sharing the expense of $50,000 study conducted by EY Consulting’s state tax experts. EY studied business tax increases proposed in the state budget and projected the negative impact on Ohio business growth; offering the study to Gov. John Kasich and leaders of the Ohio Legislature, and testifying before the Legislature on the finds: The business taxes were not enacted.

(continued on page four)
January Oil and Gas News

We are happy to announce that Dr. Iryna Lendel, an economist at Cleveland State University, will speak at Utica Upstream, our first shale business development seminar of the year on April 6. Save the date.

Dr. Lendel and her Cleveland State colleague, Executive-in-Residence Andrew Thomas, are co-authors of a significant new study of Utica Shale economic potential, and she will discuss the results of their research.

The report projects overall opportunities for upstream exploration and production, midstream natural gas processing, and downstream petrochemical manufacturing. It points out opportunities within the energy supply chain and analyzes workforce needs and opportunities.

If you were discouraged by 2015 and what low oil and gas prices did to Utica business opportunities, it will pay you to hear about long-term prospects for Utica Shale business. You can make your reservation for the April 6 Utica business development seminar at www.uticacapital.com.

Lendel was one of our most popular speakers at Utica Summit II in October 2014. She is assistant director for the Center for Economic Development at the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State.

The Utica study that Lendel and Thomas authored was undertaken for the Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy’s Shale Committee, with support from the Economic Growth Foundation and JobsOhio. The study was made public in mid-November.

This is a good start to our fifth year of oil and gas business information and development services, produced in collaboration with our partner, Joe Barone, founder of Shaledirectories.com.

Speaking of Joe Barone, his weekly Shaledirectories newsletter, “Facts and Rumors,” is a great source of current shale information. If you are not on the Shaledirectories e-mail circulation list, you now can find a link to Joe’s Saturday morning newsletter at uticacapital.com.

As a matter of public policy, the Canton Regional Chamber remains skeptical about raising the severance tax on oil and gas extracted from Ohio’s Utica Shale at this time. Higher taxation would only make it more difficult for oil and gas explorers to operate in this low-price environment.

Some supporters of higher taxes on extracted oil and gas say that Ohioans deserve a greater return on the non-renewable resources they are losing. We like what the Ohio Oil and Gas Association recently said about the issue. It asserted that oil and gas reserves do not belong to all Ohioans. They belong to individual landowners:

“In the United States, individual landowners own the mineral rights associated with their property, not the state. This right is practically nonexistent outside of America, as the government owns the natural resources in most countries. So, to say that lawmakers are giving away Ohio’s natural resources is disingenuous.

“Mineral-rights ownership means that the property owner is free to explore and produce the rocks, minerals, oil and gas found at or below the surface of his or her property. He or she also has the right to sell, lease or give them to others.”

Contact David Kaminski
VP for Public Policy and Energy
daviddk@cantonchamber.org
(330) 458-2059

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Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce
OUTGOING MESSAGE

Outgoing message ...

• Worked with local business leaders to form an employer-based opposition to State Issue 3, which would have permitted recreational and medicinal marijuana in Ohio, then campaigned against Issue 3. **Issue 3 was defeated.**

**GOAL F: Reinforce a Chamber culture of collaboration, integration and service excellence.**

• Embraced new mission and vision statements in the staff and company culture.

• Completed membership survey and hired a professional consultant to lead a Membership Task Force.

I am proud of the accomplishments we have made this year to improve our community by fostering economic growth enabling us to attract new businesses to our region while retaining and supporting the prosperity of our existing businesses.

I invite you to join me in welcoming Brian Belden as he begins his role as the Chamber’s incoming board chairman. I am confident Brian, along with Denny and his talented staff and our board of directors, will continue to build upon the accomplishments we have achieved.

Thank you to our members for your commitment to our community and for the confidence you place in our Chamber. Along with you, I look forward to witnessing the Chamber’s continued growth and impact in our community.

Respectfully,

William C. Shivers
2015 Chairman of the Board
Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce

James D. Schweikert Joins Black McCuskey

Black McCuskey welcomes Attorney James D. Schweikert to the firm’s Intellectual Property Practice Group.

He has over 12 years of experience counseling and representing businesses on patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret and litigation matters. James reviews and manages IP portfolios and implements protection strategies.

Our Intellectual Property attorneys are well-positioned to advise and represent clients in all types of IP matters including technological, mechanical, electrical and chemical.

Black McCuskey’s team of professionals works with our clients to ensure they understand the value of their assets and provide full protection.

Our passion for what we do drives our dedication to legal excellence, and our commitment to providing exceptional services sets us apart.

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Brian Belden Elected Canton Chamber Board Chairman; New Board Members Also Elected

Brian Belden, director of sales, Belden Brick, has been elected chairman of the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce board of directors for 2016.

In his role at Belden Brick, Brian is responsible for all sales territories and distributor accounts. He has been with Belden Brick for 18 years working in various functions of sales and marketing. As a fifth generation member of the Belden family to work in the business, Brian continues with the promotion and sales of Belden Brick products throughout the US and Canada.

Brian is a member of several local boards including the Stark Development Board, vice chairman of the Aultman Hospital Board of Directors, chairman of the Aultman Foundation Board and member of the Aultman Health Foundation Board. Brian is also a committee member and former chairman of the Community Classic Golf Outing. Brian is a past board chairman (2003-2004) of Community Services of Stark County and continues to do volunteer work in the community.

Brian is a graduate of Canton Central Catholic High School (1988); The University of Akron (1993) with a Bachelor of Fine and Applied Arts Major in Business and Organizational Communications.

He is married to Joanna D. Belden and has 4 children, Blake (14), Jackson (12), Kristen (10) and Conner (7). He enjoys spending time playing golf, attending his children’s sports activities and traveling.

Newly elected members of the board are:
- **Ajay Das**, vice president of quality, The Timken Company

- **William F. Downey**, executive vice president of corporate affairs and chief security officer, Kenan Advantage Group

- **Richard McQueen**, president and CEO, Akron-Canton Airport

- **Lucia M. Pileggi**, president of the Akron/Canton/Mahoning Valley market, KeyBank

- **Steven O. Pittman**, managing partner, Bruner Cox LLP

- **Amanda “Mandy” Sterling**, vice president and corporate controller, TimkenSteel

**Ajay Das** has served as vice president of quality for The Timken Company since 2012. In this role, Ajay is responsible for quality management systems, quality assurance and quality advancement throughout the company, including business processes, product design, manufacturing, supply chain and administration.

In 2011, he was named one of India’s most valued industrial business leaders by Business World magazine. Beginning in 2009, he served as managing director of the company’s operations in India. He was responsible for the company’s operational and financial performance in India as well as acceleration of business growth. From 2007-09, he served as general manager for wind energy based in Canton. Ajay joined Timken in 1992.

**Bill Downey**, executive vice president of corporate affairs and chief security officer for the Kenan Advantage Group (KAG), is responsible for corporate security, human resources and government affairs. He joined KAG in May of 2002, previously serving as executive director of Safety and Security for Canton City Schools from 1999 to 2002. In 1999, Bill retired from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) after gaining 30 years of investigative and management experience. Mr. Downey is past chairman of American Trucking Associations’ (ATA) Homeland Security Policy Committee and served on ATA’s Board of Directors.

**Lucia Pileggi**, president of the Akron/Canton/Mahoning Valley market for KeyBank, is responsible for developing and leading the market strategy with the local market leadership team at 38 branches as well as building strong community relationships and market presence that result in new

(continued on next page)
business development and increased market share in commercial banking, business banking, retail banking, and private banking and investing. A 27-year veteran of the financial services industry, Lucia was promoted to her current role in August 2015.

Steve Pittman joined Bruner Cox LLP in 1978 and became managing partner in 2011. Steve has more than 30 years of experience in mergers and acquisition services, financial accounting, reporting, tax strategy and planning, and strategic and succession planning. At Bruner Cox LLP, Steve is responsible for assurance, tax and consulting services for various manufacturing, construction, distributive and professional service enterprises and their owners. He has developed specific expertise in merger and acquisition services, where his combined skills in tax, financial accounting, and strategic planning have produced client transactions that have proven to be long-term successes. Steve leads the Firm’s Merger and Acquisition Services Group and is a member of the Firm’s Tax Services Group, Construction and Real Estate Services Group and the Manufacturing and Wholesale-Distribution Services Group.

Mandy Sterling, vice president and corporate controller for TimkenSteel, leads TimkenSteel’s financial reporting and compliance efforts, including oversight of the general accounting function, transactional services, global consolidations, SEC & external reporting, internal and external audits, and the establishment of worldwide accounting policies. Mandy started her career at Timken in 2010, serving in various financial positions with The Timken Company. Prior to joining The Timken Company, she served twelve years in public accounting in both auditing and advisory roles. She earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Mandy is a certified public accountant and is a member of the Ohio Society of CPAs. Mandy has been a board member for ArtsInStark since October 2014.

Deadline Nearing for Business Excellence Award Nominations

Nominations for Stark County’s most prestigious business awards are due by Jan. 22, 2016.

The Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce is seeking Business Excellence Awards nominations for Stark County businesses. Help us celebrate businesses that have distinguished themselves by being a significant presence in and/or providing substantial benefit to the citizens and economy of Stark County.

To be considered, the business must be for-profit, non-publicly traded (and not a wholly-owned subsidiary of a publicly traded company). In addition, the business needs to have demonstrated several of the following attributes:

- Growth in business and/or employment
- Capital improvements
- Innovation (expansion of products/product lines)
- Longevity
- Expansion of operations and/or efficiencies
- Responsiveness to business/industry challenges
- Consistent involvement in the community
- Outstanding customer service
- Entrepreneurship

For full eligibility information, or to nominate a company, please visit www.BusinessExcellenceAward.com.

If you have questions regarding eligibility or the nomination process for the Business Excellence Awards, or are interested in sponsorship opportunities for this great event, please contact Melissa Elsfelder, event manager, at melissae@cantonchamber.org or by phone at 330.458.2073. Remember, nomination deadline is Jan. 22, 2016.

SAVE THE DATE!
Honorees of this year’s awards will be recognized during the awards dinner scheduled for Tuesday, May 3, 2016.
January AultCare Fast Break Breakfast: “Suspect not Prospect” with Marvin Montgomery

A perennial crowd favorite, Marvin “the Sales Doctor” Montgomery, Author/Motivational Speaker & Professional Sales & Customer Service Trainer, is coming back to get us Marvinized for 2015. Get ready to ring in the Fast Break new year with a fun, energizing session on Friday, January 8!

About the topic: Unfortunately, a large number of salespeople waste a lot of time and resources quoting on what they think is a prospect but is actually a suspect. A suspect is someone who is inquiring about your product or service but you have not determined if they are truly committed to moving forward. Don’t put the cart before the horse. The Sales Doctor will share what steps need to be taken in the first exploration meeting to determine very quickly if you have a solid prospect or just a suspect.

Season Passes for AultCare Fast Break Breakfast on sale now!

Our SEASON TICKET PASSES are an excellent value. When you buy an individual season pass, you’ll pay just $15 per program – a $3 saving per program, or comparable to attending two breakfasts FREE OF CHARGE.

Season passholders have access to attendee contact list upon request, get two free guest passes to use during the year, and receive other special perks all year long.

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Potential Merger Between Chambers ...

“We are very pleased with the team’s dedication and commitment toward what true collaboration looks like and how the businesses in the region will benefit.” said Steven M. Meeks, president of the Jackson-Belden Chamber.

“The goal of this work is an unprecedented level of service and advocacy for the business community. Stark County businesses have never seen what our two organizations are trying to create,” said Dennis P. Saunier, president and CEO of the Canton Regional Chamber.

The framework for this study will include:

- Mission and Vision
- Strategic Goals
- Integration of Core Capabilities (of each entity)
- Membership Structure
- Financial Structure
- Governance Structure
- Staffing Structure
- Program Leadership Structure
- Articulated Value to the Community and its Stakeholders
- Asset Integration or Restrictions
- Transition Process Steps
- Timeline for the Merger
- Process for presenting the merger to each organization’s respective Board of Directors
- Name and Brand

This deliberative process will take place over the next few months. “This is not easy work, but I think it is exciting work, and I believe that the volunteer leaders of our two organizations would agree,” Saunier said.

“The data compiled will show what each organization’s strengths and weaknesses are and how possibly working together will create a more conducive, streamlined organization, with a focus on better serving the business community,” Meeks said.

If the result of the work is a merger recommendation from the joint merger study team, that recommendation would be sent for review to both chambers’ boards of directors. If a proposal passed review by both boards, it then would be sent to the members of both organizations for a vote to approve the merger proposal.

The Jackson-Belden Chamber has about 800 members, and 300 of those members may also be members of the Canton Regional Chamber. Jackson-Belden sponsors a wide variety of business development and member networking events. It also has an active Ambassadors program and a young professionals organization.

The Canton Regional Chamber has about 1,600 members and serves the greater Canton region in business and economic development outreach. It also concentrates on development of the core assets of the city of Canton. It, too, has a young professionals program, operates Leadership Stark County and organizes the Pro Football Hall of Fame Enshrinement Festival in cooperation with the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Jackson-Belden and Canton Regional already collaborate on the festival, with Jackson-Belden sponsoring the annual Music Fest and Fireworks event and Canton Regional Chamber sponsoring the Balloon Classic. Both events are conducted simultaneously at the Kent State University at Stark Campus.

Both chambers have significant common interests in the development of the Pro Football Hall of Fame and its Hall of Fame Village, which is expected to create significant economic development and tourism-industry opportunities.

Both chambers also have programs in small-business development.

The next few months could bring historic change for both organizations, but only if it is change that serves the interest of each organization and its members.
Want to get more done, run more efficient meetings, and think strategically? Energize your non-profit organization with the latest trends, best practices, and techniques.

Attend the Building Better Boards seminar and start 2016 moving smoothly toward your organizational goals. Members of local non-profit boards, agency staff, and interested community members are encouraged to attend. The seminar is being offered to ensure that non-profit agencies and their board members have access to best practices and current trends.

The seminar includes these sessions:

- The Role of the Board, **Sara Strattan**, executive director, Community Legal Aid

- Legal Responsibilities of Board Service, **Randy Snow**, Black McCuskey Law Firm

- Communicate Effectively in Difficult Situations, **Julia Dick**, president, MOLA Productions and **Paula Mastroianni**, chief development and marketing director, Western Reserve Public Media

- Communicate Effectively in Difficult Situations, **Julia Dick**, president, MOLA Productions

Register online at LeadershipStarkCounty.org or call 330-458-2095 for more information.

**Thursday, March 3**
8:00-11:30 a.m.
Aultman North Canton Medical Group,
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6046 Whipple Ave NW, North Canton
Cost: $35 per person, $105 for 4 from same agency
Government Leadership Academy is a five-week course of leadership development promoting excellence in local governance. This course is ideal for civic-minded individuals interested in impacting local issues, government and service leadership. Current and potential elected officials, members of school boards, local boards and commissions, and any interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

Learn how YOU can participate in your government, even if you don't run for office.

Government Academy topics include:

• Finding and using your strengths
• Strengths based citizen engagement
• Local & regional shared services
• Working with and utilizing the media
• Strengths based economic development
• Regionalism
• Levels of citizenship
• Campaigning
• Government ethics
• Board training

Government Academy runs Feb. 2-Mar. 3 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00-6:00 p.m. A concluding program will be held on Mar. 8 at 11:30 a.m.

The curriculum is facilitated by Leadership Stark County staff and by Dr. Chet Bowling, Ohio State University Extension.

Tuition is $425, and tuition assistance is available for individuals from government or non-profit organizations. Registrations will be accepted through January 18 or until the class is filled.

The Academy is a collaboration among Leadership Stark County, Stark County District Library and The Ohio State University Extension.

The Government Leadership Academy is recommended by: Phil Giavasis, chair, Stark County Democratic Party, and Jeff Matthews, chair, The Stark County Republican Party.

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Stark County District LIBRARY www.starklibrary.org

Congratulations Ronald Dougherty and Randall Hunt for your commitment of service to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

COMMITTEE ADVOCATES. INDUSTRY LEADERS.

Ron Dougherty, a director and the third member of the firm, has been active and chairman of various Enshrinement Festival activities and committees since its beginning in 1953, serving as General Chairman of the Pro Football Hall of Fame Festival, as well as interim Executive Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Pro Football Hall of Fame over the years.

Ron is a member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Pro Football Hall of Fame and chairman of the Joint coordinating Committee that serves as liaison between the Enshrinement Festival department of the Chamber and the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Randall Hunt, a director of the firm, has been actively involved with the Pro Football Hall of Fame for many years.

Randy currently serves as Chairman of the Board and is Member of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees.

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Learn proactive, survival strategies in violent intruder or active shooter situations from Bob Thompson and Chris Moffitt, Training Specifics, Inc., career law enforcement officers and certified ALICE instructors.

Join us for the Stark County Safety Council Luncheon on Thursday, January 14. The ALICE program is designed to give participants insight and response options that are vital to survivability when encountering a violent, life threatening situation.

ALICE (Alert*Lockdown*Inform*Counter*Evacuate) is a highly effective and “common sense” training has been readily adopted by many educational law enforcement institutions in Ohio and throughout the United States.

About Our Speakers: Training Specifics (TSI) is based in Hubbard, Ohio, and was started by two police officers who are passionate about their training, and training others. Owners Chris Moffitt and Bob Thompson combined have over 40 years of law enforcement experience and currently hold positions as Sergeants and Training Officers. They had been training police officers for many years when Chris and Bob realized there was also a need for training civilians. As certified ALICE trainers and Solo Engagement for the Active Killer instructors, Chris and Bob are also dedicated to protecting children in school, along with family and friends in the work place & place of worship.

Thursday, Jan. 14
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Meyer’s Lake Ballroom
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Cost: $16
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UPCOMING UTICA EVENTS

UTICA UPSTREAM
Presented by the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce & ShaleDirectories.com

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

UTICA MIDSTREAM
Presented by the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce & ShaleDirectories.com

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

UTICA SUMMIT IV
Presented by the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, ShaleDirectories.com and The Repository

Information Coming Soon!

LEARN MORE OR REGISTER FOR UTICA UPSTREAM AT UTICACAPITAL.COM

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WELCOME to our newest members, who joined Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce in November. We encourage you to patronize their businesses. If you know of other businesses that would benefit from Chamber membership, please contact the Membership Department at (330) 458-2067.

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NEW MEMBERS
BIZ BITZ

Schauer Group, Inc., a leading provider of business risk management services and insurance placement in Northeast Ohio, has announced the opening of its Broadview Heights office. By strategically expanding its service footprint to accommodate growth in the Cleveland market, this new location allows the firm to better serve business partners throughout the region. “This expansion positions us to provide focused support for clients of our risk management and insurance services in the Cleveland area,” said David T. Schauer, third-generation president of Schauer Group. “Our new office is built on our commitment to help our business partners manage risks successfully, with timely service and accurate advice from our highly skilled local Cleveland team.” Schauer Group’s new office is located at 9200 South Hills Blvd., Suite 145, in Broadview Heights, accessible from I-77 and Royalton Road. With industry-leading capabilities spanning business insurance, employee benefits, contract surety and risk management services, the new location houses four local associates, with additional space to accommodate future growth.

Patients, their families and other residents of Northeast Canton experienced the Spirit of Mercy at a community Christmas Open House held December 4 at Mercy Medical Center at St. Paul Square. Mercy Medical Center collaborated with community partners to offer families from the center’s surrounding neighborhoods a fun and festive afternoon focused on health and wellness this holiday season. Activities included a visit with Mrs. Claus, face painting, blood pressure screenings, diabetic education, dental screenings and oral health information, refreshments and winter wellness gift bags.

At its December board meeting ArtsinStark’s Board of Directors approved $1,182,000 in grants to 74 organizations, schools, and individual artists across Stark County. The grants were awarded in four different categories: Operating, Special Project, SmArts, and 20/20 Vision. “These programs and projects touch every single community in Stark County,” said ArtsinStark board chair Max Deuble. “And they show the incredible impact of the arts on community and economic development, and just how far ArtsinStark has come in the last 10 years in serving all of Stark County.” The projects supported through the Grants Program reach 200,000 people a year. Over the last 10 years ArtsinStark has awarded $10 million in grants to the seven largest arts groups: Canton Ballet, Canton Museum of Art, Canton Symphony, Massillon Museum, Palace Theatre, Players Guild and Voices of Canton - and another $1.5 million in grants to 600 small non-profits, artists, and schools in every community in Stark County.

New sculptures are on exhibit at the Canton Museum of Art. Life can be a circus, a fairy tale, a competition, a puzzlement. Clay artist Kristen Cliffer addresses it all with thoughtfulness and humor through her whimsical yet potent sculptures in the new exhibition, Out of the Woods and into the Ring, at the Canton Museum of Art on view now through March 6, 2016. On February 5, 2016 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. join Kristen for a special event “Cupcakes and Cocktails” during First Friday. Indulge in cupcake decorating as a fun activity for the whole family and then kick back and enjoy custom cocktails designed by the artist herself.

Martindale-Hubbell conducts Peer Review Ratings of attorneys nationally on an annual basis and are widely considered to be the gold standard in attorney ratings. Michael S. Gruber, a principal at Gruber, Thomas & Co., has achieved their top AV rating for over 16 years and therefore qualified for national recognition as a Top Rated Lawyer. He was recognized in the November 2015 edition of The American Lawyer. Michael has practiced real estate law and business law since 1977. He has a BA in Political Science and JD from the University of Cincinnati. He is the current chairman of the Stark County Bar Association Real Estate Committee and is active with a variety of community organizations.

Marisa Rohn, former director of marketing and communications at Stark State College, has been named executive director of advancement, marketing and the Stark State College Foundation. Rohn assumed her new role on December 18, when Joanne Lally Eberhart, current executive director of advancement and the Stark State College Foundation, retired. “The College has benefitted greatly from Joanne’s expertise and experience in fundraising and advancement, and we appreciate her assistance in successfully transitioning the department to a new leader after announcing her retirement,” said Stark State College President Para M. Jones, Ph.D. “Marisa has a strong background in both marketing and fundraising and is the ideal leader for the newly combined Marketing and Advancement Division. Rohn will continue to focus on advancing the College’s image and reputation locally, nationally and internationally, while working to enhance relationships and monetary support for both the College and the Stark State College Foundation.

415 Group recently hired four associates, three technology consultants and five interns. Alan McManus, Joseph Monaco, Kimberly Span and Maria Nicholas joined 415 Group as full-time associates. The firm also hired five full-time interns from University of Mount Union, Kent State University and University of Cincinnati for the upcoming busy season beginning January 2016. The technology consulting division hired Luis Jimenez, Ray Smalley and Michael Richeson, which has expanded the technology department to nine employees. In addition to the various computer technology services offered by 415 Group, the firm now offers managed services, which include fully-staffed help desk support, complete server and desktop monitoring 24/7 and virtual CIO management advice and support.

Additionally, 415 Group announced three firm promotions. David Besse was promoted to principal. David joined the firm as Director of Technology Consulting Services. David is a graduate of Nova University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and holds a Master’s Degree in IT Security from the University of Maryland. He holds multiple IT certifications, including Certified Information Systems Security Specialist (CISSP), Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA), and Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer and Administrator. David is an Adjunct Professor at Stark State Community College teaching both networking and IT Security and serves on several community boards of directors.

Natalie Simmons, CPA, was promoted to principal. Her primary focus is on accounting and taxation for non-profit, corporate and multi-state taxation. Natalie is a Certified Public Accountant and a graduate of Kent State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a major in Accounting. She serves on the board of directors of Domestic Violence Project, Inc. and has volunteered for numerous community organizations. Brian Raber, CPA, was promoted to manager. His primary focus is on the taxation of individuals and small businesses. He also provides compilation and review services for various businesses and non-profit organizations. Brian graduated summa cum laude from The University of Akron with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting in December 2009 and completed the Master of Taxation program in May 2012.

Have business news you’d like to share via Biz Bitz? Send your news release to Collyn Floyd, director of marketing, at collynf@cantonchamber.org.
January AultCare Fast Break Breakfast
www.cantonchamber.org
“Suspect Not Prospect”
Presenter: Marvin “The Sales Doctor” Montgomery

January Luncheon: Stark County Safety Council
www.StarkCountySC.com
ALICE Training: “I’m Ready, Are You?”
Featuring Bob Thompson and Chris Moffitt, Training Specifics, Inc.

COMING UP IN FEBRUARY
February 2-March 3 – Government Academy
February 16 – Crime Prevention Breakfast at Tozzi’s on 12th
February Stir After Hours at The Crush House - date coming soon!

ystark! is excited to announce that Seth Turner, supervisor, Hall, Kistler and Company LLP, will serve as the 2015 chair of ystark!’s executive committee.

Seth Turner joined ystark! in 2013 and quickly become an elite-engaged member, attending (literally) all our events and joining our executive committee as membership chair. He graduated from Stark State College and holds a license as a certified valuation analyst. Seth and his wife Susan live in Alliance with their daughter Chloe and son Trent. When he’s not professionally auditing or reviewing, he’s personally out reviewing his many favorite places in Stark County. With this, Seth brings a dynamic and complementing regional perspective to our volunteer leadership team.

ystark! Announces 2016 Executive Committee Chair

ystark!
Young Professionals Engaged in Stark County

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