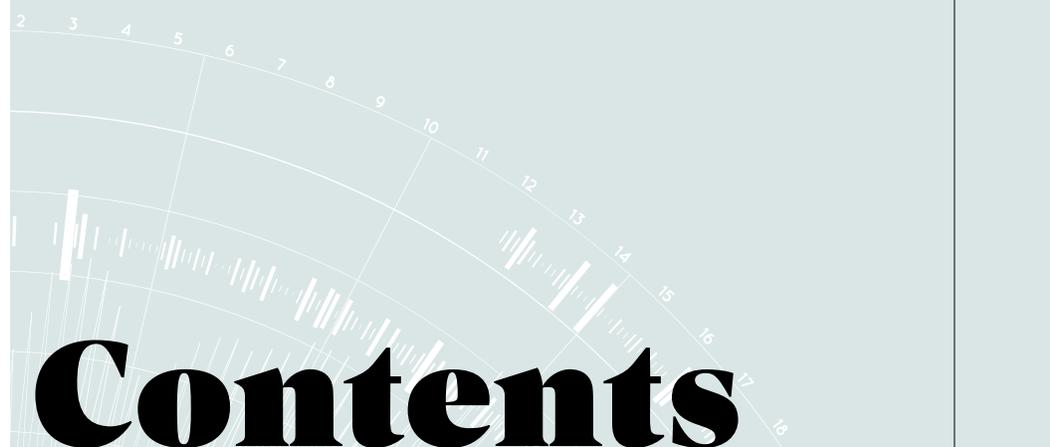
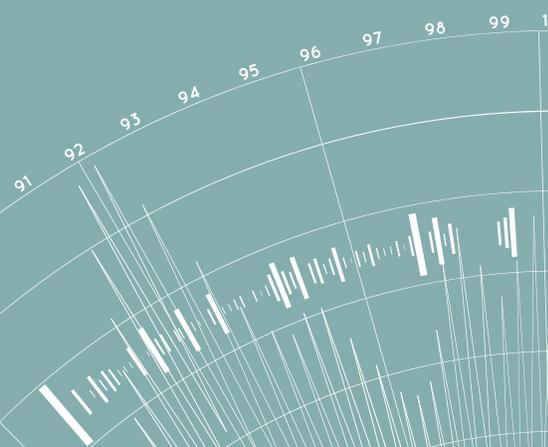




Innovate. Partner. Invest.

APPALACHIAN OHIO  
Return On Investment  
2022 ANNUAL REPORT





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Front Cover: Downtown Chillicothe  
Left: Barnesville Pumpkin Festival  
Back Cover: Garden House, Historic Zoar Village

# Strengthening Ohio's Appalachian Region

This annual report is produced by the four Appalachian  
local development districts of Ohio

## Buckeye Hills Regional Council

1400 Pike Street, Marietta, OH 45750

[buckeyehills.org](http://buckeyehills.org) | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400

Serving: Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington counties

## Eastgate Regional Council of Governments

100 E. Federal Street, Ste. 100, Youngstown, OH 44503

[eastgatecog.org](http://eastgatecog.org) | 330.779.3800

Serving: Ashtabula, Mahoning and Trumbull Counties

## Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association

326 Highland Avenue, Ste. B., Cambridge, OH 43725

[omegadistrict.org](http://omegadistrict.org) | 1.800.726.6342 | 740.439.4471

Serving: Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson,  
Muskingum and Tuscarawas Counties

## Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission

73 Progress Drive, Waverly, OH 45690

[ovrdc.org](http://ovrdc.org) | 740.947.2853

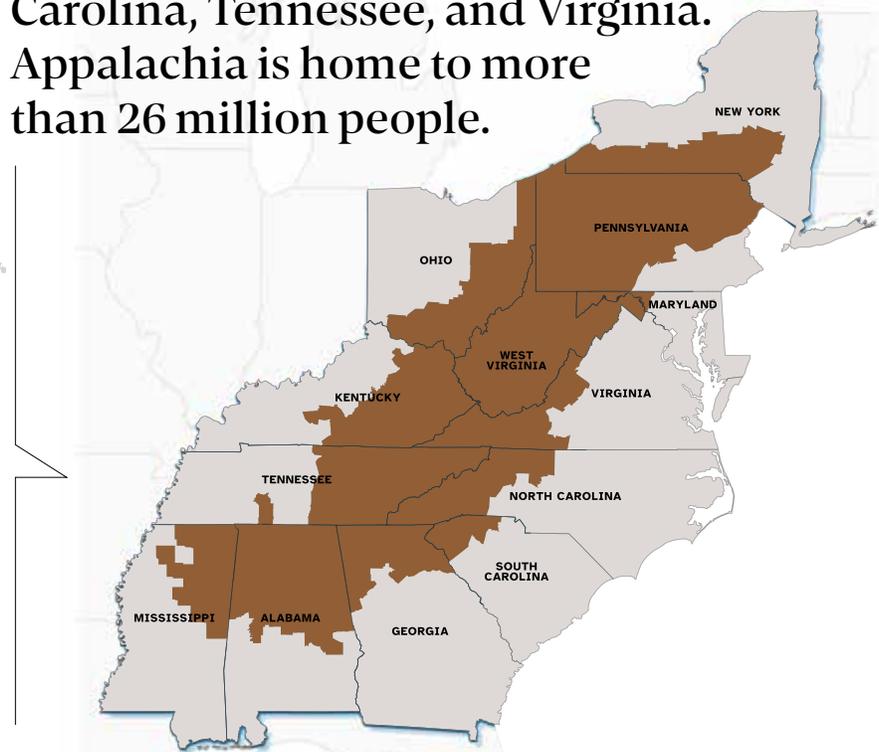
Serving: Adams, Brown, Clermont, Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross,  
Scioto and Vinton Counties

# Investing IN APPALACHIA

With 423 counties, the Appalachian region includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states including: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Appalachia is home to more than 26 million people.



**The 13-state Appalachian region is defined as a 206,000 square mile area that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from the southern tier of New York to northern Mississippi.**

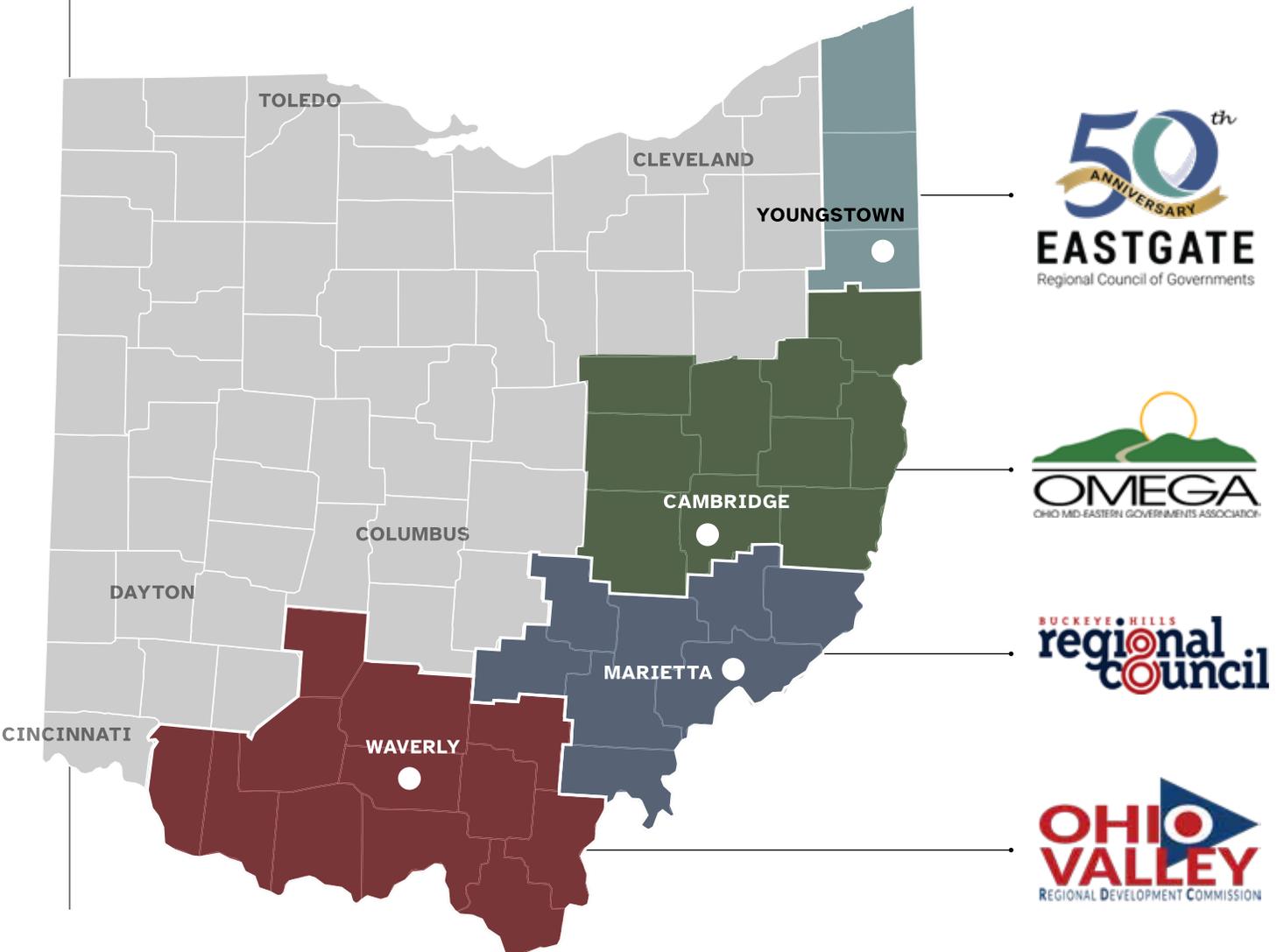


With the goal of bringing the region to socioeconomic parity with the rest of the nation, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has focused investments into fundamental community and economic development needs, including building Appalachia's businesses, workforce ecosystem, infrastructure, regional culture and tourism, and community leaders and capacity.

Ohio is home to 32 Appalachian counties and bolsters federal ARC funding with a matching state investment. Within this region, four Appalachian Ohio Local Development Districts (LDDs), organize community-driven projects and target funds for distribution from federal and state partners to ensure positive movement toward the mission of the ARC: to bring the region to socioeconomic parity.

The LDDs' most important role is to identify the priority needs of their local communities. To ensure that funds are used effectively and efficiently, and to strengthen local participation, Ohio's project selection process includes a grassroots approach through which local governments prioritize both the state and federal investments across the region for the greatest regional impact.

# OHIO'S FOUR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS





# Strengthening APPALACHIAN OHIO

In 2022 Appalachian Ohio's Local Development Districts (LDDs), working in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Governor's Office of Appalachia, and local communities, administered 46 projects representing \$95.8 million in federal, state, and local investments. These projects created 388 new jobs and helped the region's employers retain 281 positions.

Once again, Ohio's LDDs demonstrated a strong return on investment on state and federal dollars in 2022. For each dollar invested by the Appalachian Regional Commission, LDDs and their local communities leveraged an additional investment of \$7.44. Similarly, for each dollar invested by the Governor's Office of Appalachia, LDDs and local communities leveraged additional investments of \$5.88.

The combined administrative costs of \$1.8 million represented less than 2 percent of the region's \$95.8 million in total project costs. Ohio's LDDs use this administrative support to identify, prioritize, and package projects for state and federal support. The LDDs work to ensure the most impactful projects that leverage significant resources can move forward expeditiously, with transparency and accountability.

With over 50 years of experience providing administrative, policy, and programmatic support to local governments, Appalachian Ohio's LDDs possess:

- 1. Expertise on economic and social challenges facing the region.*
- 2. Organizational transparency, accountability, and capacity managing major projects to address many types of regional infrastructure needs—and with a great return on investment (ROI).*
- 3. Deep knowledge of the region's challenges and opportunities for infrastructure, entrepreneurship, and workforce development.*
- 4. Solid, trusted relationships with local communities and key stakeholders in the public, private and nonprofit sectors.*

As Appalachian Ohio recovers from the historic pandemic, Ohio's Local Development Districts continue to work with communities to support projects that align with the Appalachian Regional Commission's strategic goals of Building Appalachia's Businesses, Workforce Ecosystem, Community Infrastructure, Regional Culture and Tourism, and Community Leaders and Capacity.

# Investment Visualized

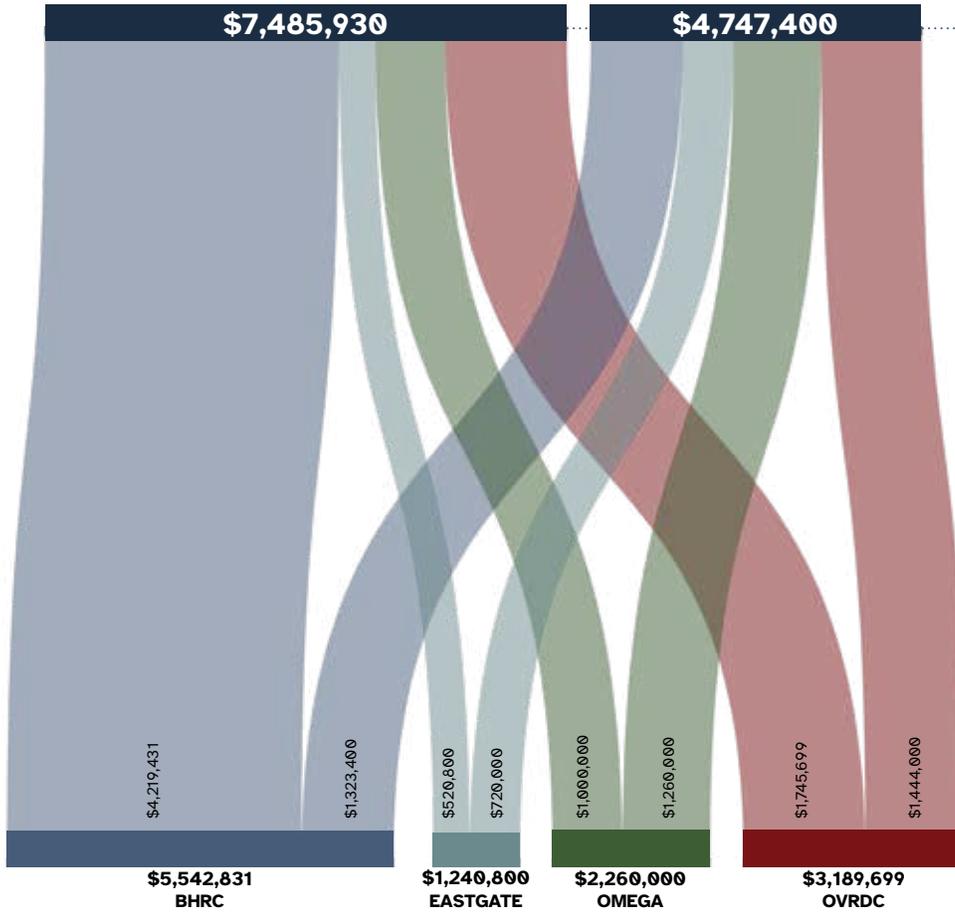
## Federal and State Investment

### Federal ARC Investment

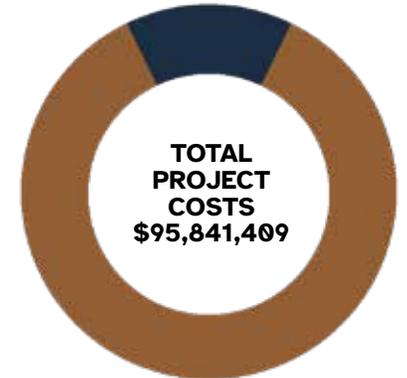
For every \$1 invested by ARC, Ohio LDDs leveraged \$7.44 in additional investments.

### Ohio GOA Investment

For every \$1 invested by GOA, Ohio LDDs leveraged \$5.88 in additional investments.



**\$12,233,330**  
Federal and State Investment



**\$83,608,079**  
Total Leveraged Investments

## Federal ARC Grant Programs

2022 TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

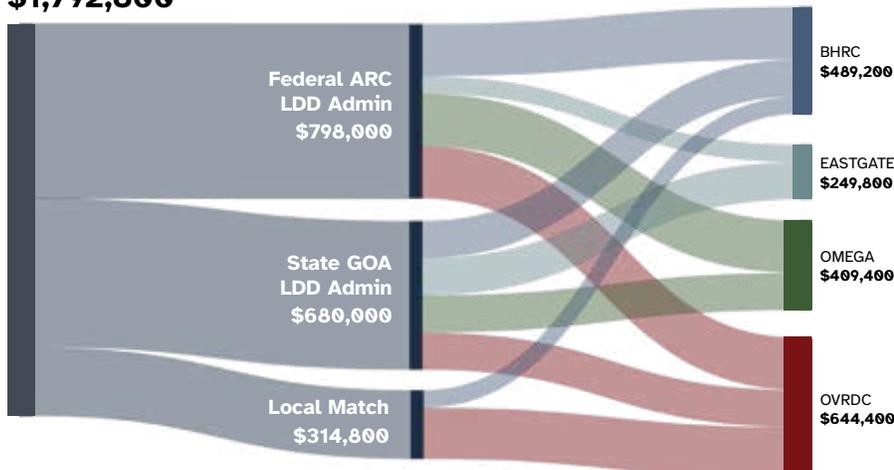


**PROJECTS ADMINISTERED** 21    **JOBS CREATED** 63    **JOBS RETAINED** 14

## Total Admin Cost

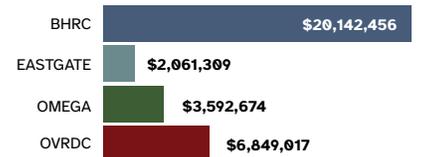
Admin costs represented 2% of total project costs in 2022

**\$1,792,800**



## State Appalachian Assistance Grant Programs

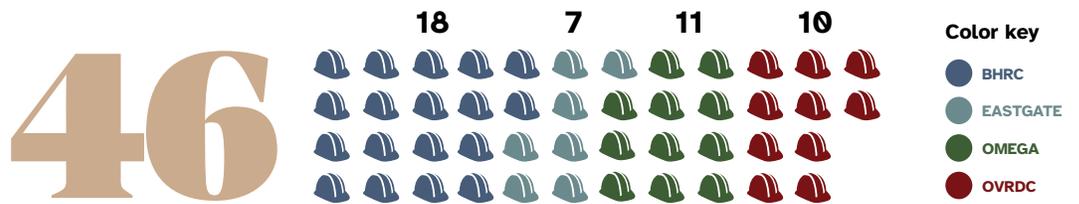
2022 TOTAL PROJECT COSTS



**PROJECTS ADMINISTERED** 25    **JOBS CREATED** 325    **JOBS RETAINED** 267

# INVESTMENT Impacts

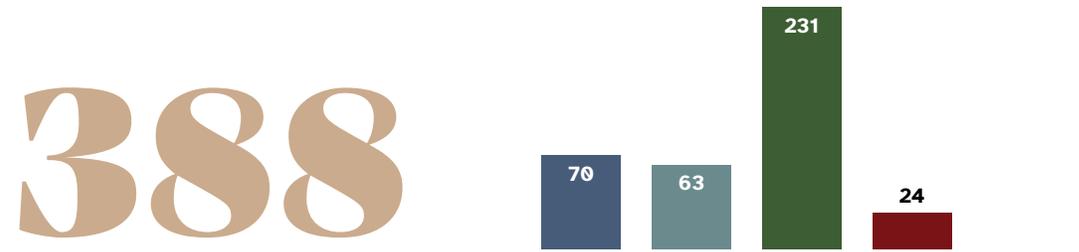
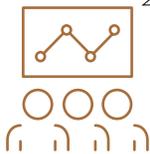
**TOTAL PROJECTS  
IN THE REGION**



**TOTAL JOBS  
RETAINED**



**TOTAL JOBS  
CREATED**



**TOTAL PROJECT  
INVESTMENT**





# Community Investment Highlights

## Community Infrastructure



**OVRDC**

ARC Area Development Funds:

**\$1,000,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$13,477,500**

Partners:

**Ohio EPA, H2Ohio, Army Corps of Engineers, Ohio Department of Development (CDBG), Ohio Public Works Commission, Ohio Water Development Authority**

### *Bainbridge Gravity Sewer Collection System and Wastewater Treatment Plant*

ROSS COUNTY

In Ross County, the Village of Bainbridge is planning to replace existing on-site sewage treatment systems with a centralized gravity sewer collection system and wastewater treatment plant to ensure the availability of quality, affordable basic infrastructure built to meet the needs of the residents and businesses of Appalachia. With adequate facilities, the village will have the potential to maintain existing businesses and increase economic development opportunities. The Village of Bainbridge has a population of 754 and the village's low-to-moderate income percentage is 63.52%. The project includes the construction of a gravity sewer collection system and 150,000 gallon-per-day wastewater treatment plant to improve 40 businesses and 250 households.



## *Washington County Rural Electric Cooperative: Broadband Make-Ready*

### WASHINGTON COUNTY

This project will immediately make telework available to 147 households, who will be able to provide additional income to their families. Local businesses will be able to expand their connections in and out of the communities allowing for increase sales. Residents with broadband in their homes can access tele-health and tele-education services, saving critical family dollars by not having to travel for services. Their students will be able to receive education through on-line college classes or adult education completed by a career center.



## *South River Road Waterline Extension Project*

### ASHTABULA COUNTY

This project will enhance public infrastructure and support economic development with the construction of a 11,400 linear feet of waterline improvements in Harpersfield Township. The project will serve 10 residences, 9 businesses, 30,000+ annual visitors/tourists in Harpersfield Township in Ashtabula County.



### BHRC

ARC Area Development Funds

**\$750,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$1,106,050**

Partners:

**Washington County Electric Cooperative, Noble County EMA, Ohio State University Extension, Governor's Office of Appalachia, Broadband Ohio**



### Eastgate

Appalachian Assistance Funds:

**\$250,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$1,650,000**

Partners:

**Harpersfield Township Board of Trustees, Ashtabula County Commissioners, South River Vineyard, Red Eagle Distillery, M. Cellars Winery, Polly Harper Inn**



**OMEGA**

*St. Clairsville Water Distribution System Improvements, Phase 1*

**BELMONT COUNTY**

ARC Area Development Funds:

**\$250,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$3,124,950**

Partners:

**Ohio EPA, Belmont County Water and Sewer District**

The City of St. Clairsville was awarded an ARC grant to make improvements to its water distribution system. The \$250,000 ARC grant leveraged a loan of \$2,874,950 from the Ohio EPA's WSRLA to construct over 28,000 linear feet of waterlines. Existing water lines are almost 100 years old, have reached the end of their useful life, and have caused a high volume of water loss through leaks. The City is under Findings and Orders from Ohio EPA to connect to another public water supply and will soon be purchasing water from the Belmont County Water and Sewer District. The project is improving the drinking water for 2,252 households and 230 businesses in the city.



**OVRDC**

*Franklin Furnace Booster Station Project*

**LAWRENCE & SCIOTO COUNTIES**

GOA Appalachian Assistance Funds:

**\$250,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$927,000**

Partners:

**City of Portsmouth, Governor's Office of Appalachia, Ohio Public Works Commission**



The Franklin Furnace Booster Station Project requested \$250,000, to defray costs associated with construction of a new booster water pumping station. This project will increase capacity and serve 25 significant industrial and commercial customers that, during peak usage, account for more than 10% of demand in the entire distribution system. This project is in an area with significant existing industrial development activity which also has additional available parcels for expansion. This project will ensure proper water supply now and for future economic growth in this area.

It will support and assist the community in rural Appalachian Ohio as they work to establish, maintain and extend critical infrastructure systems while improving 25 businesses and retaining 250 jobs.

## Workforce Ecosystems

### *Genesis Healthcare Coshocton Campus Access Road*

**COSHOCTON COUNTY**

Genesis Healthcare System is constructing a new hospital in Coshocton County, which will create 215 new healthcare jobs. Using funds from GOA and ODOT, a 1,213 linear-foot access road to the new hospital has been constructed. The primary purpose of this project is to ensure safe and adequate access to the new Genesis Healthcare Coshocton Campus, a \$45 million private investment in the community. This full-service hospital will provide diagnostic, specialty care, and outpatient surgery to the community. The new road also provides access to two 30-acre parcels that are prime for commercial and industrial development.



### *Cave Lake Center for Community Leadership Fire Suppression*

**PIKE COUNTY**

In Pike County the Ohio-West Virginia Youth Leadership Association (YLA) needed to install a fire suppression system for a newly constructed lodge. However, the local water utility could not provide sufficient water pressure for meeting State Code requirements. The project will install a



complete fire suppression system with water storage, pumping facility, and back-up generator to serve existing buildings and add capacity for future expansions. This project helps provide opportunities to build the skills of current and next-generation leaders who innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development improvements. It promotes leadership with capacity-building educational initiatives during organized events, settings, training sessions, conferences, and summer camps. Some 800 youth and adults will benefit through these safety improvements to the Cave Lake Center for Community Leadership.



#### **OMEGA**

GOA Appalachian Assistance Funds:

**\$250,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$500,000**

Partners:

**Genesis Healthcare System, Coshocton County, City of Coshocton, Tuscarawas Township, Port Authority, TID, ODOT, OhioSE, JobsOhio, local foundations**



#### **OVRDC**

ARC Area Development Funds:

**\$250,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$529,754**

Partners:

**Pike County Commissioners, Pike Chamber of Commerce, Pike Community & Technical Center, State of Ohio, First National Bank of Waverly, University of Rio Grande, Western Pike Schools**



**BHRC**

### *Noble Green Acres - A Regional Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem*

**NOBLE COUNTY**

ARC Area Development Funds:

**\$181,931**

Total Project Costs:

**\$299,931**

Partners:

**Zane State College, Noble County Commissioners, Ohio State University - Noble Extension and Research Farm, Ohio Farm Bureau, Noble Economic Development Council, Noble County JFS, Noble County Local Business Advisory Council, neighboring school districts and communities**

The goal of the multi-year and multi-phase project, including the purchase of specialized equipment and related resources for onsite education and training programming, is to have a regional impact on traditional K-12 students, post-secondary students, local and regional employers, and other adult residents in Noble and surrounding communities in the broader Appalachian Ohio regional ecosystem. The specialized equipment and resources are directly linked to providing equitable access to education and workforce training and upskilling programs leading to in-demand industry-recognized credentials and post-secondary training in partnerships with employers, community organizations, and higher education institutions to improve employability and transferable skill attainment for adult workforce participants as well as the talent pipeline related to the local and regional in-demand jobs in the Agribusiness industry and related occupations. The farm opened as fully operational for the 2022-23 school year resulting in 1,127 students grades PreK-12 being impacted, served, and exposed to agribusiness workforce and career exploration programs and services.



**OMEGA**

### *Muskingum University Henry D. Bullock Health and Wellness Center*

**MUSKINGUM COUNTY**

GOA Appalachian Assistance Funds:

**\$250,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$503,115**

Partners:

**Zane State College, Muskingum and Guernsey County Community Improvement Corporations, chambers of commerce, healthcare providers, local school districts**

OMEGA assisted Muskingum University in obtaining a GOA grant for equipment needed in its new Henry D. Bullock Health and Wellness Center in New Concord. The GOA Area Development grant provided \$250,000 for new health and wellness equipment for workforce development training which will also be used for rehabilitation and improving the performance of student athletes. The new equipment will provide innovative workforce development programs to increase the health and well-being of the region while also providing a platform for research and development around innovative health and occupational safety initiatives to drive regional economic growth in collaboration with healthcare providers, business and industry partners, and technology entrepreneurs.

## *Ashtabula County Technical & Career Center (A-Tech) Medical Simulator Equipment Project*

### ASHTABULA COUNTY

This project will support workforce development and increase access to health care with the purchase of equipment to enhance the educational skills of the regions nursing students, EMT high school and adult programs at the Ashtabula County Technical & Career Campus (A-Tech). The project will serve 30 RN students, 132 LPN students, 6 hospital orientation classes, and 36 EMT students annually. Learn more at [atech.edu](http://atech.edu).



### Eastgate

ARC Area Development Funds:

**\$67,700**

Total Project Costs:

**\$96,789**

Partners:

**Ashtabula County Technical & Career Campus (A-Tech), Ashtabula County Medical Center, Ashtabula County Commissioners, Ashtabula County Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, Andover Village**



## Regional Culture & Tourism



### *Morgan History Center Expansion*

**TRUMBULL COUNTY**

**Eastgate**

GOA Appalachian Assistance Funds:

**\$222,200**

Total Project Costs:

**\$522,709**

Partners:

**City of Warren, Trumbull County  
Commissioners, Trumbull County  
Tourism Bureau, Trumbull  
Neighborhood Partnership**

This project will support strategic investments in cultural heritage resources to enhance economic development and promote tourism to strengthen the local economy with the construction of a 2,000 sq ft addition at the Morgan History Cultural and Education Center. The project will create a welcome center and gift shop in Warren's National Register Historic District, an exhibit gallery for residents and tourists, and house historic documents and materials in a collection preservation and training lab (CO-LAB), bringing over 9,000 visitors and 28 organizations annually spending \$37.5 million per year in the local economy.



### *Monroe Theatre Interior Improvement*

**MONROE COUNTY**

**BHRC**

GOA Appalachian Assistance Funds:

**\$266,000**

Total Project Costs:

**\$337,840**

Partners:

**Monroe County Commissioners  
and public, OSU Extension Monroe  
County**

This project will construct the second-floor mezzanine at the historic Monroe Theatre in downtown Woodfield. The project will provide additional seating to the theatre which will in turn provide additional revenue. The theatre was constructed in 1939 and currently seats 300. However, many of the shows have been standing-room-only events. For future economic sustainability of the theatre, and for the comfort and enjoyment of the public, it is necessary to increase the seating capacity by constructing a second-floor mezzanine to install additional seats. The Theatre is currently working with a geotechnical engineering firm to test the floor to see if it can hold the weight of a second-floor mezzanine.



## Regional Collaboration

### *Local Development Districts, Ohio University Host Appalachia Forward Regional Conference*

Appalachian Ohio's Local Development Districts partnered with the Voynovich School of Leadership and Public Service at Ohio University to host the second annual Appalachia Forward conference on October 5, bringing together local elected officials and development staff to discuss planning, funding, and transformative change for the Appalachian region. The conference was held at Shawnee Lodge and Conference Center and was also livestreamed.



Lydia Mihalik, director of the Ohio Department of Development, in her opening remarks, described the various, exciting investments intended to uplift Appalachia, with an overall purpose to assist each of the Appalachian communities in reaching their goals.

The conference consisted of three panels, each of which covered various issues pertaining to members of local Appalachian governments, such as development, sustainability, revitalization, and tourism.

John Carey, director of the Governor's Office of Appalachia, said the importance of the event was to learn from one another and recognize the impact of collaboration.



# Appalachia Forward

# Broadband

## *Ensuring Equity and Accountability in Broadband Expansion*

While we are cautiously optimistic about the potential for regional broadband expansion in the coming years, we continue to advocate for accurate mapping and independent verification of provider commitments to ensure that everyone in Appalachian Ohio can participate in the digital economy.

In 2022, the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant program made significant awards to multiple internet service providers across Appalachian Ohio. This included an award of \$98 million to South Central Power, a rural electric co-op that will offer fiber to the home in unserved areas of Monroe, Belmont, Harrison, Highland, Pike, and Ross Counties. Other communities receiving last-mile broadband support in 2022 included Washington County (ARC POWER), Noble County (GOA Distressed County fund), Adams, Brown, Scioto, Lawrence, Gallia, Fayette, Perry, Morgan, Muskingum, Coshocton, Carroll, Jefferson, and Columbiana Counties (ORBEG), and the Village of Amesville in Athens County (GOA Distressed County Fund). Charter Communications also has begun work on its Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) commitments in the region.

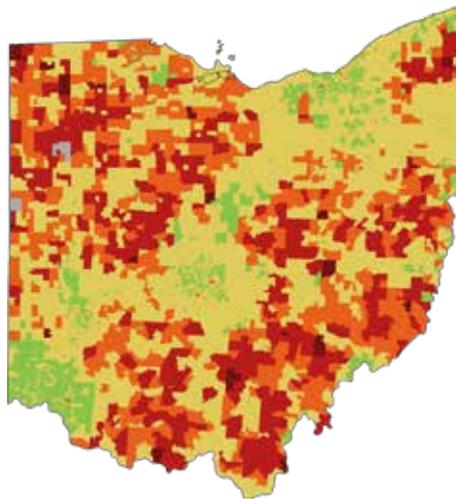


Figure 1 - Actual Speeds  
(green=served, yellow=underserved, red/  
orange=unserved)



Figure 2 - FCC Claimed Speeds

While these projects are encouraging, reliable broadband remains the exception rather than the rule. When the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released its much-anticipated new broadband maps, they painted almost the entire state green (above 100/20 Mbps). While the new FCC Fabric does much better showing locations of homes and businesses than its predecessor, the new map still overstates coverage.

To ensure that the lived experience of Appalachian Ohioans is represented accurately in Federal grant programs, BHRC, OMEGA, and OVRDC have joined the Ohio Broadband Mapping Initiative. Backed by a broad coalition of local governments and private businesses, the Initiative analyzes multiple data sources, including millions of speed tests, to map the true extent of Ohio's digital desert. These maps will support future grant applications and be used to file FCC bulk challenges that will help improve the FCC's data and ensure that federal funding goes where it is most needed.

These independently produced, statistically sound broadband maps also can help verify the progress of publicly funded projects. When a provider claims they have served an area, it is a simple matter to compare the current map with those from previous years. For example, Charter Communications recently expanded service in Byesville (Guernsey County) as part of its RDOF commitment. This claim is easily verified using speed test data. In 2021, nearly all Byesville speed tests were below 25/3 Mbps (orange) or below 10/1 Mbps (red). Today, most results are yellow (50/10) or green (100/20). On top of this speed change, the surrounding countryside also contains many more test locations, evidence that more residents now have broadband than before.

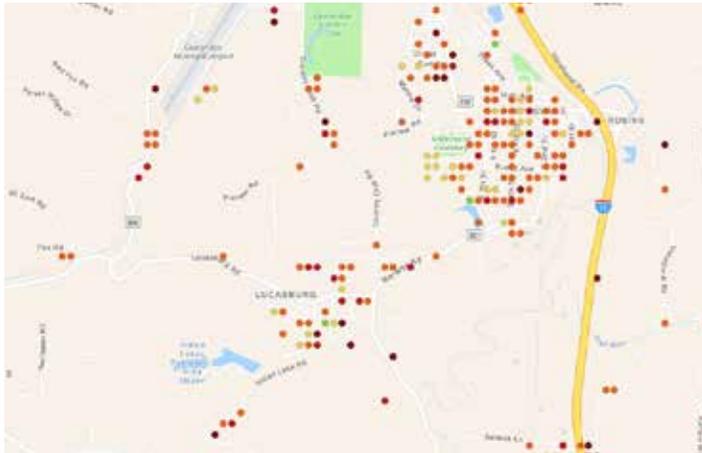


Figure 3  
In 2021, Byesville was mostly unserved (red/orange)

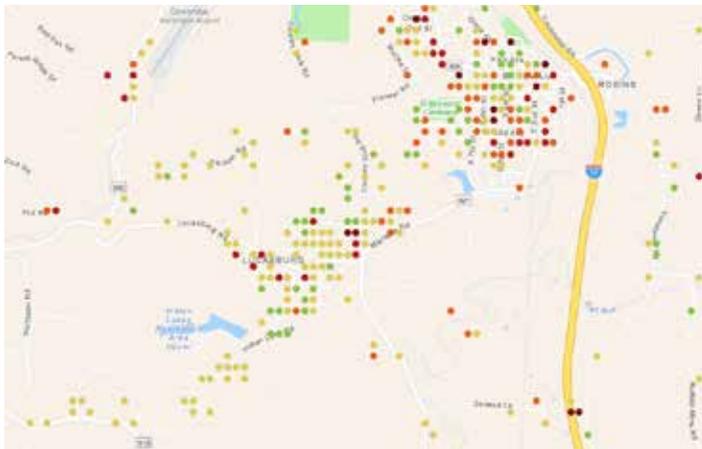


Figure 4  
Broadband speeds in Byesville improved in 2022

By advocating for official maps that reflect the true experience of our residents, we can help make good broadband available to everyone in our region.

# Broadband

# EASTGATE

## *Lake to River Broadband Strategy*

In 2022, Eastgate continued to pursue the recommendations of the Regional Broadband Feasibility Study that was completed in June of 2021. This study was a collaborative effort made possible by a 2019 ARC POWER award to the Trumbull County Planning Commission, and a 2020 Economic Development Administration (EDA) award to Eastgate.

One of the major recommendations of feasibility study was the construction of a 100-plus mile broadband fiber line along State Route 11 that would run from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. This project will span the distance of four counties, including Ashtabula, Trumbull, Mahoning, and Columbiana. The construction of this fiber line will impact nearly 620,000 citizens in the region, providing access to the underserved throughout Appalachian Ohio. Through a close working relationship with BroadbandOhio, Eastgate was able to secure a \$500,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Development to carry out an Engineering Analysis for the project. Subsequently, the Lake to River Fiber Line was included in the State of Ohio's Middle Mile Plan application in the fall of 2022 to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Middle Mile Program. Both the results of the Engineering Analysis and a potential funding announcement from the NTIA are expected in the Spring of 2023.



## *Mahoning River of Opportunity*

Expanding on the successes of removing the low-head dams along the Mahoning River, a legacy of the region's industrial past, Eastgate is taking the next step to connecting the adjacent communities to this natural asset. A hallmark project in regional collaboration, the Mahoning River of Opportunity will explore critical investments in downtown revitalization and quality of life. The groundwork for this initiative was set up by the Mahoning River Corridor Revitalization Plan that provided a regional approach to re-envisioning and redefining the river corridor. The plan focused on ecological improvements, restoration efforts, expansion of recreational amenities, and enhancing economic development opportunities, both regionally and within each of the 13 communities. Partners across the region are prepared and eagerly anticipating the State of Ohio's Appalachian Community Grant Program to help facilitate the many transformative projects that have been identified.

# BHRC

## *Downtown Revitalization Workshop Series*

Following the creation of a downtown revitalization plan for the Village of Caldwell and Noble County, the Development Division of Buckeye Hills Regional Council saw more interest from communities in using downtown revitalization strategies to foster community development. With the growing tourism economy in the Southeast Ohio region, it became clear to many of the communities in the region that both visitors and residents were looking for communities where they could work, live and play.



Buckeye Hills Regional Council utilized CARES funding from the Economic Development Administration to recruit an Ohio-based consulting firm to deliver a series of workshops on best practices in placemaking and downtown revitalization. After an extensive review of proposals and subsequent interviews on the mission of these workshops, BHRC selected Designing Local as the consultant for this project. Designing Local, who worked on the previously mentioned Village of Caldwell plan, clearly understood different regional economic sectors in the Buckeye Hills region. The two entities then went to work on surveying community and county stakeholders on the content areas to be covered during these two-hour workshops. After responses were collected, the following subject areas were selected: community branding, placemaking, wayfinding, historic preservation, site infrastructure, technology infrastructure, and tourism planning. With one workshop in each of the eight counties, the goal was to engage community members on the best strategies to improve their downtown areas while also educating them on available funding opportunities.

While these workshops were planned well before the announcement, interest in the series grew once the news was shared that Ohio Governor DeWine planned to allocate \$500 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the 32 Appalachian Ohio counties for investment in downtown redevelopment, healthcare, and workforce. These workshops resulted in some of the highest event participation in recent years for Buckeye Hills Regional Council. This project demonstrated the organization's ability to respond to the priorities of communities while proactively readying them for future investment.

INDO  
Hills  
starts

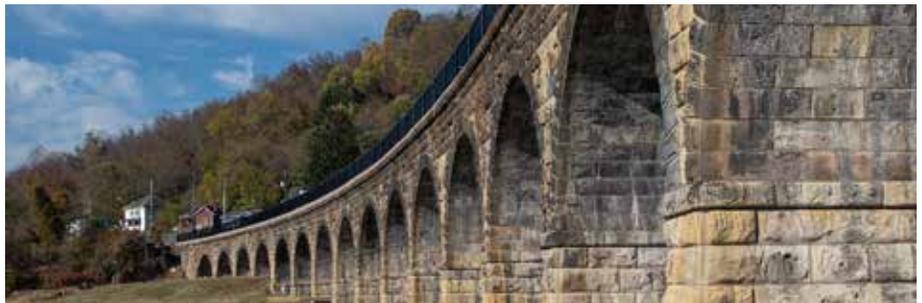
## OMEGA

In 2022, OMEGA obtained almost \$12.7 million in funding for the region from sources other than the ARC/GOA Area Development Program. Most notable include a \$1,999,000 ARC POWER Grant to extend broadband in Carroll County, a \$5,000,000 grant from the EDA for the Construction Trades Building at Belmont College, and a \$2,155,616 grant from EDA for The Wilds for a new RV campground. Located on 10,000 acres of reclaimed coal mine lands, the Wilds is a nonprofit safari park and conservation center which is a cornerstone of the ecotourism industry in the region with a total projected annual economic impact of almost \$18 million. These projects will improve 53 businesses, create 275 new jobs and retain 138 jobs.



Using CARES Act funding from EDA, OMEGA also completed a Regional Broadband Feasibility Study. The study identified the unserved/underserved areas of the region, the cost to provide service to these areas, identified funding sources for broadband expansion, developed a strategy for prioritizing broadband expansion and will form the basis to pursue funding opportunities for broadband expansion in the OMEGA district.

OMEGA conducted ten workshops across the region on the new Appalachian Community Grant Program and assisted with the first round of technical assistance applications to this program. When complete, the program will transform Appalachian Ohio as \$500 million of ARPA funding will be put towards transformational projects in rural communities.



# OVRDC



In 2022, the Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (OVRDC) ARC INSPIRE award for The Southern Ohio Employer Resource Network deployed success coaches to the largest employers in Ross County (Adena Medical Center) and Jackson County (Bellisio Foods), with great interest from other employers.

OVRDC presented findings from EDA-funded projects focused in two areas: a broadband mapping effort to support critical broadband infrastructure expansion; and a tourism report to ecotourism economic opportunities in the region. OVRDC also participated in BroadbandOhio's Community Cohort 15-week workshop with eight counties participating and collecting survey results from approximately 2,000 respondents.

Ironton and Jackson received grants through EDA's Coal Communities Commitment. The City of Ironton received a \$2 million grant to make necessary roadway and water infrastructure upgrades to help attract new businesses to the city's main industrial area, South Ironton Industrial Park.

The City of Jackson EDA award of \$2.4 million will upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure for adequate fire protection and eliminate unsafe drinking water.

OVRDC successfully implemented its new Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) awarding more than \$1.2 million to nine projects in the region. OVRDC also awarded \$40,000 in planning grants to conduct safety studies in two of the region's counties.

The creation of the Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP), a \$500 million-dollar generational investment by the DeWine Administration, the Ohio Department of Development, and the Governor's Office of Appalachia encourages sustainable, transformative change and collaboration.

INDO Highlights



**THIS REPORT WAS PRODUCED  
IN GRATITUDE FOR OUR FUNDERS,  
PARTNERS, AND SUPPORTERS  
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**Appalachian  
Regional  
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**Governor's Office  
of Appalachia**



**Department of  
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