

Little Cities Partners At Work!

Buisnesses Growing Experience Economy

Several new businesses have popped up in the microregion during the past year that join a growing array of options that improve quality of life for those of us who live here while at the same time enhancing visitor experiences. They include My Little Bakery, located on Main Street in Corning; Shawnee Mercantile on West Main Street in Shawnee; Our Country Cottage Gifts located on High Street in Glouster; Tecumseh Trails Off Road offroad vehicle trails on State Route 155 in Shawnee and at least two new campgrounds opening in the Shawnee area, one operated by the McLean family and the other the Howdyshehl family.

Athens Armory Recieves a Historic Marker

On May 19, the Athens Historic Preservation Commission, the City of Athens, and the Southeast Ohio History Center unveiled an Ohio Historical Marker in front of the century-old Athens Armory. Mayor Steve Patterson, Representative Jay Edwards, and History Center Director Tom O'Grady helped dedicate the marker, while Living Historians portrayed Ohio National Guard soldiers and American Red Cross volunteers who used the building during the First World War. The marker commemorates the history of the building, and the people, soldiers and civilians, who used it in its first one hundred years.

Rendville Dedicates Second Historic Marker on Emancipation Day; Honors Union Organizer Davis

The Rendville Historic Preservation Society and the Ohio History Connection will dedicate an Ohio Historic Marker honoring African American union organizer Richard L. Davis at this year's Emancipation Day on Saturday, September 22 (dedication 12:30, event Noon-5pm) in the Perry County village. Davis' prolific letters to miner's journals of the early labor movement and his recruitment of African Americans and Eastern European immigrants into the United Mine Workers during the powerful union's formative years were provocative and unparalleled during the late 19th Century America. Ohio University professor Frans Doppen published a book on Davis last year and his work and the fundraising work of his students and the RHPS have made this marker possible. It joins other markers at Rendville, Haydenville, Shawnee, Nelsonville and New Straitsville to commemorate the microregion's rich history.

Hocking College Re-Opens Micro-Distillery in New Straitsville

Prohibition, temperance and moonshining are a rich part of our region's history, especially in New Straitsville. In recent years that history has come to life with the Moonshine Festival and the opening of a legal distillery, Straitsville Special Moonshine. The distillery is now transitioning to play a bigger role in the region's experience economy due to its recent purchase by Hocking College as a teaching site for their new fermentation science program that will include vineyards, wine making and microbrewing as well at other locations. The ribbon cutting for the new venture took place at the opening of this year's festival on Memorial Day Weekend.

Suarts Opera House Expansion and Renovation

The region's most iconic physical and social structure, Stuart's Opera House, located on Public Square in Nelsonville, celebrated its new downstairs lobby expansion, and upstairs classroom and recording studio spaces early in 2018. The project also included renovation to the expanded spaces after a near disastrous fire in 2015 and was made possible by over 3 Million dollar fundraising campaign

Head Downtown: First Friday, Second Saturday Events Highlight Community Assets

Attracting townspeople, regional residents and visitors to our historical, cultural and natural assets in the Little Cities Region and then being ready to host them is one of the most challenging aspects of redeveloping our microregion around experiential tourism. Picking a special day each month for folks to show up has been a key element of Nelsonville's rejuvenation which for nearly a decade has been anchored by their Final Friday event where shops and galleries stay open late with special programming and art openings adding to the mix. During the past year two smaller "little cities" and one country neighbor have embarked upon this strategy. Shawnee's Second Saturday at Sundown began in August 2017, with better than expected crowds attracted to visiting food trucks, live music, beer, art vendors, hikes on the Buckeye Trail and more. This year, Amesville, who is a likely partner with efforts in the Little Cities region though not a coal town, has added their own Second Saturday on Saturday mornings featuring a farmer's market, entertainment and special programs. Most recently, Glouster in Athens County launched a First Friday event with live music and food trucks downtown beginning at 5PM each month. Hats off to all of the organizers of these important gatherings that helps build awareness and economy around asset-based development.

Documentarion tells Millfield Mine Disaster, Rendville Stories

Pittsburg area musician and documentarian Burr Beard has relocated to Athens to hone his media skills at the Scripps School of Communications and like many intrigued with the southeastern Ohio hills, has discovered the Little Cities region. The result is a recently released film titled Millfield Mine Disaster 1930. The nineteen-minute film uses as its centerpiece a rarely seen 16mm silent film shot on the day of the disaster, November 30, 1930 when 82 men perished in mine explosion in the Athens County mining community of Millfield. Public screenings of the film took place during May at various libraries in Athens County as well as the Tecumseh Commons in Shawnee. At the Shawnee screening, Beard also shared a rough draft of another mini-documentary he is doing on the inter-racial mining community of Rendville. Audience members, including several former Rendville residents, helped critique the film which will premiere this summer.

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Black Diamond Press

An Annual Update from The Little Cities of Black Diamonds Council

Membership & Donors Matter
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Passages to Change: Transportation Transforms the Region

Our 2017-18 theme, **Little Cities of Black Diamonds theme Passages to Change: Transportation Transforms The Region** allowed the LCBD Council to give credence to transport as our LCBD Day and Appalachian Spring events studied how mobility has created change in our lives, economy and landscape with each passing adjustment and advancement. As we pondered the topic, we recognized that the lands of Sunday and Monday Creeks were never densely inhabited, even after European settlement, until the arrival of the railroad to ship Hocking Valley Coal. The new rail lines pierced through tunnels and snaked through narrow river and creek basins after the Civil War to create "little cities overnight, as if by magic." Thus the story of the Little Cities is inextricably tied to not only minerals, but also to means of transportation.

Thousands of newcomers arrived here by virtue of powerful and magical iron horses, many fresh off of ships crossing the Atlantic. What was to be responsible for our region's rising, would also contribute to our decline and struggle as the boom years were short lived. Advancement in mining technologies and transportation made our region a destination for massive extraction and living in urbanlike settings short lived, as it came to a screeching halt during the late 20's and 30's. With each passing decade of out-migration and decline in the mid to late 20th Century, the role of the automobile, trucks, highways, interstates and increasingly speedy land and air travel left behind communities once easily connected to anyplace in America by rail, without rail service. What once were melting pot immigrant en-

claves with hotels and train stations to handle the newly arriving traffic, would become rather isolated remnant communities where employment was not guaranteed and services as basic as groceries and doctors offices were suddenly at a distance, rather than on Main Street.

Little Cities of Black Diamonds Day

The 24th Annual Little Cities of Black Diamonds Day in Shawnee highlighted this year's theme with exhibits and programs featuring photos and artifacts ranging



Transportation Procession: From Trails to Rails & Back Again

from a tea set from a B & O Railroad dining car to a horse drawn wagon which gave rides throughout the village. Throughout the day there were a variety of transportation related performances and speakers including Ken Bowald who, as a living history character, portrayed Peter Hayden the founder of Haydenville and investor in the Hocking Canal and Hocking Valley Railroad.

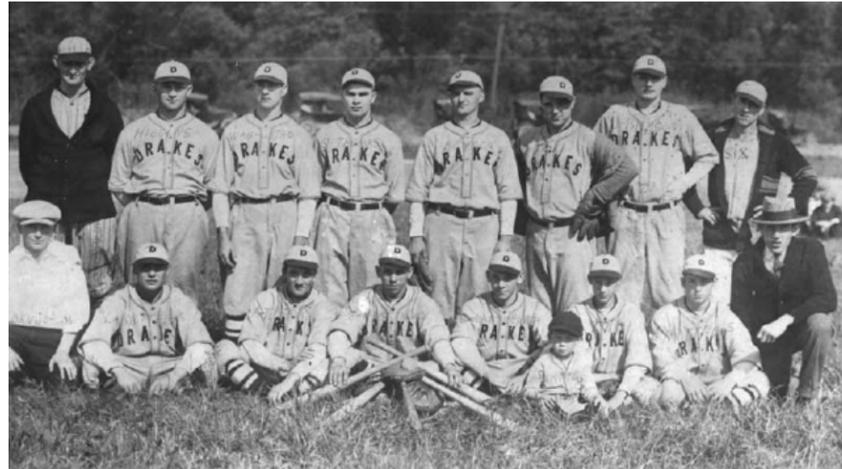
Dr. Ivan Tribe discussed the history of the "Iron Horse" and the rail lines that crisscrossed the region. The highlight of the days events was achieved with a "Procession of Transportation" parade. Led by Patricia Anderson LCBD volunteer and member of the native Shawnee tribe, showcasing the transition of transportation from Native American trails to the modern roads and rails that connect the region with a return back to woodland trails recognizing the role of hiking, horseback, ATV and bicycle trails and their influence on today's emerging outdoor recreation economy in the region.

Continued on Page 2

2018-2019 Little Cities of Black Diamonds Theme Sports in the Little Cities The great uniter, divider, and equalizer!

As the various coal camps of the Little Cities region were established in the 1870s and 80s, the populations included a large percentage of men. The social activities of the area while varied, always included sports. Baseball, football, boxing, horse racing, foot racing and bicycling were participated in by many. A greater number came out to watch the competitions. At first, newspaper references were made to the ethnicity of the sportsmen such as two boxers being referred to as "Scottish and Welsh fighters. As time went on, the loyalties formed around the town and citizens boosted their communities. Women gradually entered the arena by the early 1900's and produced their own set of stories that live on to this day. We believe this is a story worth exploring. The LCBD Council has selected the theme of Little

Cities Sports: Uniting, Dividing and Equalizing. We are asking our members and friends to help us share this theme by collecting stories, artifacts and images. Our themed exhibit will premiere on **Little Cities of Black Diamonds Day, Saturday, October**



Drakes Baseball Team, 1923

13th in Shawnee. Presentations on the history of sports will continue through the spring of 2019 as part of our Appalachian Spring events. A working committee has formed to collect stories and artifacts for the theme and prep for LCBD Day. We invite anyone with an

interest in sports and a willingness to volunteer time, stories to attend and help us.

Save The Date! Volunteer!
Little Cities of Black Diamonds Day 2018
Saturday, October 13 • Historic Shawnee

Transportation Transforms the Region (cont. from page 1)



2018 Appalachian Spring Series

Transportation was reinforced during 2018 Appalachian Spring series as the Council hosted it's 13th Annual Tour de Forest Benefit Bicycle Ride on a sunny April Saturday where over 60 riders had the opportunity to choose from multiple bicycle routes spanning from a 'set your own length' ride at 20 miles, to a 53 mile gravel route, a 75 mile road route, that passed through the cities and forest that make up our microregion. We're excited and already making plans for the 2019 Tour de Forest!

Transportation Talks at the Nelsonville Library anchored the season. These well

attended talks covered Native American trails, canals, the railroad, and a book talk with author Norm Fox whose new book, **The Buckeye Trail**, (Arcadia Publishing) chronicles the history of the 50 year old, 1,440+ mile trail that circles the state, bisects our microregion, and has its headquarters next door to the LCBD Council. A screening of the new Millfield Mine Disaster documentary directed by Burr Beard was held in Shawnee with a "music of transportation" concert with songstress Wolf Crescent Walker outdoors at the Nelsonville Library. The LCBD Council would like to thank the **Athens County Public Library** for their partnership with Appalachian Spring this year, as well as the Ohio Arts Council for their on-going support for our cultural year!

4.21.2018

tour de forest bicycle benefit ride
through the Little Cities of Black Diamonds microregion

**Hocking College
Nelsonville**



Your Council At Work!

Little Cities Spirit Awards Recognize Cyrus Moore, and Joe Brehm



Joe Brehm and Cyrus Moore

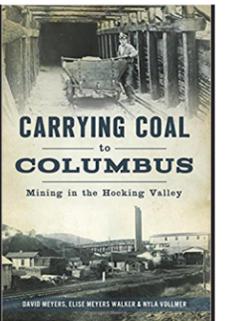
Starting in 2001, the LCBD Council began recognizing special citizens in our microregion who work to make a difference in their community. Among past recipients are teachers, hairdressers, storekeepers, miners, archivists, archaeologists, engineers and a student. Some wrote stories or poetry. Some were artists. All of them donated time, creativity and labor to make life better for our families by improving the environment, saving history or saving buildings and educating others about the importance of our region. Many have passed away or retired but we value them because they valued our region and culture. This year's awardees are no different.

Cyrus Moore III, a life time member of the Athens County community, has both volunteered and served as an Americorps at the Southeast Ohio History Center. He's also worked all over the whole of Appalachia Ohio with a variety of museum and historical societies, and specifically helping the Little Cities archives, reorganizing to meet national standards. Cyrus' passion is World War I history, and his interpretation of that time period has been particularly beneficial to area history events.

Joe Brehm, of Glouster, is a passionate naturalist, who has guided hundreds of students and adults into the region's woods to learn about one of our key assets: ecological diversity. Joe's engaging style of teaching and community organizing has inspired teachers to engage in hand-on outdoor learning and is contributing to a new generation of stewards of the region's natural environment through his work as Environmental Educator at Rural Action.

On-line 'Company Store' Opens (www.littlecitiesofblackdiamonds.blog)

In January of 2018 LCBD officially opened an online shop appropriately named the 'Company Store' where books, shirts and other merchandise we normally have at events and in our office in Shawnee are for sale. We have a few new products for sale this year including the new published book 'Carrying Coal to Columbus' As early as 1755, explorers found coal deposits in Ohio's Hocking Valley. The industry that followed created towns and canals and established a new way of life. The first shipment of coal rolled into Columbus in 1830 and has continued ever since. Authors David Meyers, Elise Meyers Walker and Nyla Vollmer detail the hard work and struggles as the industry unfolded in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region. Also available is a new shirt with the logo and slogan 'Stories as deep as the mines, and as vast as the nation.' This long sleeve, 100% cotton shirt is perfect for Ohio's cold and warm weather



A New Donations Shed light on Miners of the 40's

In October 2017, a visitor brought in two boxes of books that had belonged to his great grandfather Henry P Ley. Mr. Ley was a mine inspector for the state of Ohio. He lived in Glouster and was responsible for safety inspections on mines in Athens, Morgan, Perry, Washington and Noble Counties. The books include Mine Inspection Reports, handwritten in pencil. The records are from June, 1939 through September, 1950. In addition, there are *Proceedings of Miner Inspector Institute of America* meetings, industry catalogs, trade manuals, and Department of Industrial Relations lists of mines and quarries.

The reports and records cover a transitional period of decline in mining. More mines are listed as truck mines or quarries, rather than deep mines shipping by rail. Reference to closed mines, frequent ownership changes of the mines and problems getting labor, especially during World War II, are many. Towns mentioned include mines from Cutler and Crooksville to Millfield, Waterford and everything in between. Names of owners, and foremen are found in the records. The books may be seen at the LCBD archive, 127 West Main St. Shawnee but may not be removed from the office. Students and historians may find them interesting and revealing in their research of the 1940s in the region.

Tour Services Continue to Grow

Since the last publication of Black Diamond Press, the Council has hosted over two dozen tours to university and private parties, sharing our region's story and making new friends for the region's asset-based redevelopment. The number of international visitors has grown significantly due to our relationships with Ohio University. Among tours of note was a tour for incoming Ohio University president Duane Nellis, his wife and key deans at the university, a national Rural Women's Studies Conference, the Study of the United States Institute from the Scripps College bringing journalists from twenty countries to the region, delegations from Hungary, Ecuador, Egypt and Ghana and participants in a Consortium of Overseas Student Teacher Programs conference. We emphasize regional assets on these tours, and insist that we are not the "poverty tour", rather a tour of a region working to rebuild itself around its key assets of history, natural beauty and unique boom-town architecture with key stories of immigration and race, labor union development, and environmental degradation/recovery.