



**GROWTH
PARTNERSHIP**

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I'm very proud to be the first chair of the BE NKY Growth Partnership Board of Directors to lead the company under its new name and branding.

Outside pressures, including high interest rates, economic uncertainty, high cost of construction materials, and supply chain delays, caused businesses to be more cautious in their site location and expansion decisions, but the BE NKY team still achieved strong results.

Despite these challenges, the BE NKY Team **won 16 projects in 2023**, announcing **1,419 new jobs** and more than **\$383 million in capital investment**, surpassing the latter goal by nearly \$100 million. Seventy percent of our project wins came in advanced manufacturing across several target sectors, including food and flavoring, medical device manufacturing, and electronics, and 37 percent were NKY headquarters operations.

Our economic development team successfully completed trips to international conferences, including MRO Europe, InterBattery in South

Korea, and the Paris Air Show, where our first-ever outbound marketing and LinkedIn digital advertising campaigns made an impression on nearly 160,000 people resulting in several leads and multiple meetings.

This year we launched a new initiative to create a Community Strategy. BE NKY staff identified 70 "strategic base" companies, representing a cross-section of industries and 25 percent of the overall workforce in NKY. The BE NKY Board of Directors and key staff members met with these companies to address challenges they face and ensure Northern Kentucky develops data-driven and business, community-engaged plans for ongoing success.

The BE NKY team will continue targeted business attraction outreach, existing business retention work, and aggressively marketing the amazing Northern Kentucky region. I know we will achieve meaningful results for our community in 2024.



James A. Dressman

Board Chair, BE NKY Growth Partnership
Partner, DBL Law

CONSISTENT GROWTH & INVESTMENT IN NKY

16 PROJECTS WON
64% of our goal

\$383M CAPITAL INVESTMENT
27% above our goal

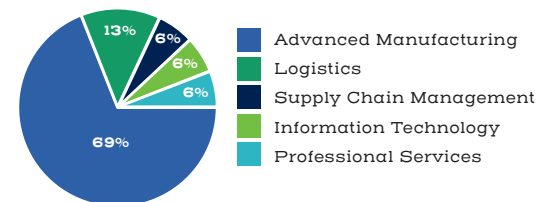
\$48,060 AVERAGE WAGE
70% of our goal

8 COMPANIES received funding or credits to assist with workforce training

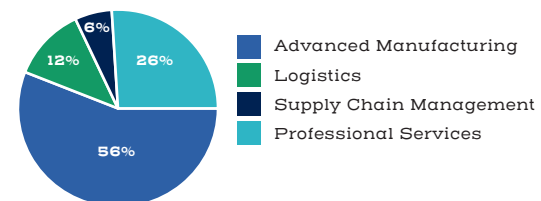
1,419 JOBS ANNOUNCED
79% of our goal

\$60,874 TOTAL COMPENSATION
79% of our goal

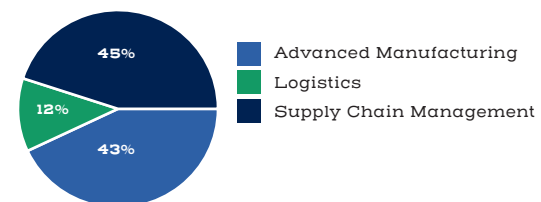
PROJECTS BY SECTOR



ANNOUNCED JOBS BY SECTOR



CAPITAL INVESTMENT BY SECTOR



MESSAGE FROM JUDGES/EXECUTIVE

Building a Path to Prosperity with a Focus on Workforce and Housing

As leaders of three Northern Kentucky counties, we want all Northern Kentuckians, and the businesses that call this region home, to thrive.

Meeting companies' hiring needs is a top priority and challenge for us. BE NKY Growth Partnership and many community leaders and organizations are working to address this issue from all angles.

A lack of income-aligned housing is one barrier to increasing the region's workforce. This year, the Northern Kentucky Area Development District served as the administrator of a large data study by Stantec. This study dove into housing inventory, cost, and relationship to economic conditions and jobs, providing a shared baseline of information for organizations working toward housing solutions.

Education organizations are also working to fill the pipeline with the next generation of skilled workers. Programs such as NKY FAME at Gateway Community and Technical College give young people the opportunity to receive an education while gaining experience working for a local manufacturing company.

Retaining talent and company culture are other top areas of concern for local employers. BE NKY staff continue to meet with companies to discuss hiring and retention challenges and work toward solutions.

As communities throughout the country deal with the effects of both a labor and housing shortage, we will lead our region in the important work toward addressing these challenges and drawing new people to Northern Kentucky and into our workforce.



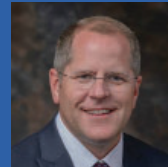
Gary Moore

Judge/Executive
Boone County



Steve Pendery

Judge/Executive
Campbell County



Kris Knochelmann

Judge/Executive
Kenton County

The following are among companies that invested, expanded, and created new jobs in Northern Kentucky in 2023:

Ancra Cargo

Avure Technologies

Bakery Express

Balluff

Blum-Novotest

Castellini

DHL Express Americas

FUN.com, Inc.

JAVAD GNSS

Keller Warehousing &
Co-Packing

The Kroger Co.

Matrix Pack North America

Safran Landing Systems

Sterling Cut Glass

NEW COMPANIES INVEST IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY



Advanced Manufacturing / Food & Flavoring

Bakery Express MidWest, a commercial bakery manufacturing company, announced it will build a \$10 million facility in Boone County, creating more than 175 new full-time jobs. This project win was the result of an inquiry through the BE NKY website. The company's 35,000-square-foot facility will serve Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee with production of fresh-baked goods.



Advanced Manufacturing / Materials & Packaging

Matrix Pack North America, a producer of sustainable and environmentally conscious paper products, announced it will build a \$47.9 million facility in Boone County, creating 144 full-time jobs. The 100,000-square-foot facility allows the company to meet growing demand by expanding production of paper straws, lids, cutlery, and to-go containers.



Information Technology / Software / IT

JAVAD GNSS, a manufacturer of satellite navigation receivers, announced a new location in Kenton County. The office in Fort Wright will create up to 20 well-paying engineering positions. This facility will focus on research, development, and engineering design for precision satellite navigation and serve as a creative center for professional engineers in firmware development and electronic design.



Advanced Manufacturing / Materials & Packaging

Ankra Cargo, a leading designer and manufacturer of cargo securement systems for transportation, opened its new Hebron headquarters early in 2023. This \$8 million investment created more than 50 full-time jobs. The renovation and upgrade of the 150,000-square-foot facility consolidated multiple manufacturing and warehousing locations under one roof and expanded the company's product development, quality control testing, and marketing capabilities.



EXISTING NKY COMPANIES IN KEY INDUSTRY SECTORS EXPAND

Supply Chain Management / Aviation Maintenance

DHL Express, a global leader in international express shipping, announced the expansion of its operations at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG). This \$192 million investment will create 86 jobs. A 305,000-square-foot aircraft maintenance facility will be built adjacent to DHL's current CVG Airport hub. This project will bring the company's total Kentucky employment to more than 3,800.



Supply Chain / Logistics

Kroger Fulfillment Network opened a new distribution operation in Boone County, investing more than \$550,000 and creating 98 full-time jobs. This facility will help expand Kroger's e-commerce reach in Kentucky and support the customer fulfillment center currently operating in Monroe, Ohio, by extending customers' access to affordable, healthy, and fresh foods.



Advanced Manufacturing / Food & Flavoring

Castellini, a third-party logistics company, announced the expansion of its facility in the City of Wilder to provide warehousing, co-packing, and transportation services for the food industry. This nearly \$16.6 million investment will create 180 new full-time jobs. The expansion in Campbell County will include the addition of a 36,000-square-foot freezer, increasing its capability to provide additional services in the perishable third-party logistics industry.



Advanced Manufacturing / Aerospace

Safran Landing Systems Kentucky announced an expansion of its Boone County facility, creating 92 well-paying jobs. Safran produces and refurbishes advanced carbon composite brake disks and produces aluminum alloy wheels and brakes for large commercial and military aircraft. The company has now invested more than \$300 million into this facility and employs 340 Kentucky workers.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

9 BSSC WINS

Business Retention Outreach

In 2023, 75 percent of our project wins came from our existing industry base. Through hundreds of meetings each year, Director of Business Retention Angie Mulberry helps employers overcome challenges, access state programs that support new jobs and investment in Northern Kentucky, and secure money to train employees. Business retention meetings directly resulted in 8 projects in 2023.

Eight NKY companies, including FEAM AERO, received nine allocations of funding through Kentucky's Bluegrass State Skills Corporation (BSSC) to train both new and existing employees. BE NKY staff had four meetings with FEAM AERO in 2023.



“Funding from the BSSC program has been instrumental in elevating our training initiatives at CVG. The specialized trainings cultivated more efficient problem solvers, effective troubleshooters, and overall, enhanced the skills of our technicians.”

Wayne Sisson, COO, FEAM AERO

The company received \$75,000 in Grant-in-Aid funding to train 133 employees at their growing facility at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG). Grant-in-Aid funding provides cash reimbursements for occupational and skills upgrade training.

FEAM AERO, an aviation maintenance and repair company, works on both cargo and passenger planes, performing repairs throughout the world. The company employs hundreds of people and broke ground on a new three-bay hangar at CVG in November 2022.

COMPANIES THAT RECEIVED BSSC FUNDING IN 2023:





NORTHERN KENTUCKY PORT AUTHORITY LAUNCHES FIRST PROJECTS

In 1968, Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties jointly created the NKY Port Authority as an economic development organization. The NKY Port was largely inactive from its founding through 2022. BE NKY undertook reactivating the NKY Port as a real estate and development tool as a key initiative of the Build + Elevate Northern Kentucky investor campaign.

BE NKY seeks to leverage the NKY Port's ability to identify, control, prepare, and promote sites for subsequent private commercial and industrial development and redevelopment with a focus on wages that exceed current community employment levels.

BE NKY's Christine Russell serves as the Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer of the NKY Port. BE NKY hired Mark Grauwelman in December 2022 as Real Estate and Project Manager to assist in activating and managing the NKY Port.

CURRENT PROJECTS:

OneNKY Center: The NKY Port owns this 43,000-square-foot Class A office building that will house many Northern Kentucky growth organizations and the Covington Life Science Lab. The OneNKY Center will open in mid-2025 at 97 percent occupancy.

Sims Building: Kenton County designated the NKY Port as administrator of its \$13 million site readiness fund provided by HB1, the state's two-year budget legislation passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2022. In May 2023, with money from this fund, the NKY Port purchased the former Sims building in Covington for redevelopment into Northern Kentucky's entrepreneurial hub that will be operated by Blue North.

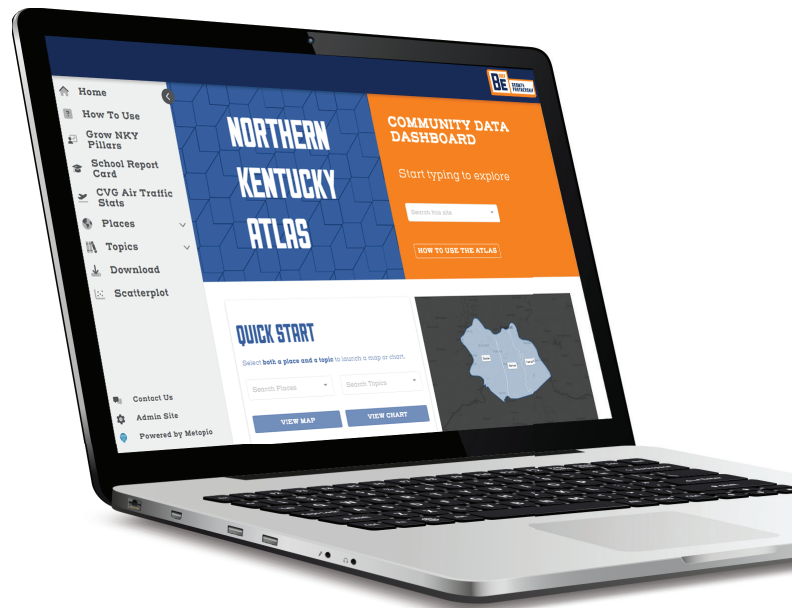


DATA-INFORMED COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

Through this initiative, BE NKY helps Northern Kentucky business and community leaders contribute to increased prosperity, growth, and equity in our region by providing them with data, insights, and a platform to inform better decision-making.

BE NKY identified four important focus areas for the future success of our region: population/labor force growth, early childhood development/third grade reading, housing affordability, and access to transportation.

Throughout 2023, BE NKY published articles about these focus areas in publications such as *LINK nky* and *The Lane Report*. In addition, Research Director David McAleese gave multiple presentations and participated in community engagement events on various topics, including the Northern Kentucky Atlas.



12,000 DATA POINTS
DOWNLOADED

2 AWARDS
WON

DELIVERING WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Workforce Development Manager Kim Spreder helps address the current and future needs of Northern Kentucky's tradable sector industries through customized workforce solutions. Kim has met with more than 30 HR leaders at companies in the advanced manufacturing, aviation/aerospace, professional/technology, and logistics management and consulting industries to learn about their talent and hiring challenges and develop potential solutions.

Aligning the challenges we face, and then developing strategies to address them, is critical to maintaining our region's competitiveness and ability to thrive.

Top 5 Employer Concerns

**Recruiting
Talent**

100%

**Company
Culture**

100%

**Retaining
Talent**

98%

**Skills
Gap**

88%

**Aging
Workforce**

85%

TARGETED BUSINESS GROWTH

Led by Business Growth Manager Jacob Edmonds, we aim to diversify the economy and retain and attract companies in Northern Kentucky by generating leads, expansion opportunities, and projects through growth strategies, marketing, and in-person business attraction programming.

BE NKY pursues opportunities to create and nurture new and existing company relationships with the goal that when these companies are ready to expand, they first look to Northern Kentucky.

- **20 campaigns** launched in 2023
- **7 meetings** with companies at the Paris Air Show
- **2 leads and impressions on 160,000 people** through BE NKY's first LinkedIn campaigns for Paris Air Show
- Business attraction efforts for **2 other international conferences:** InterBattery in South Korea and MRO Europe
- More than **8,000 emails sent**, with a **65% open rate** and **5.5% reply rate**



QUARTERLY INVESTOR EVENTS WERE HELD IN 2023

In 2022, BE NKY launched our five-year Build + Elevate Northern Kentucky Investor campaign, raising more than \$4.6 million. The funding raised through this campaign helps support four key initiatives that are integral to increasing economic prosperity in our region. Our commitments to fund the four initiatives exceed \$1 million each year.

In 2023, we hosted four quarterly meetings for our more than 65 investors, which consist of companies, government organizations, and individuals, to update them on our progress. We added several new companies and retained 98 percent of our investors. More than 300 investors and community leaders attended these events, with interactive dialogue on a variety of topics led by economic development, business, and community speakers.



BRAND LAUNCH, SPEAKING EVENTS

We successfully launched our new name and branding, transitioning from “Northern Kentucky Tri-ED” to “BE NKY Growth Partnership” in March 2023. Our new name and look more accurately portray the work we do and what our region is all about – growth and partnership.

“BE NKY Growth Partnership” and our tagline – Build and Elevate – reflect our goal of economic growth and partnership between the public and private sectors, resulting in opportunity and prosperity for all Northern Kentuckians.

We officially launched our new brand at the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce’s Eggs ‘N Issues breakfast with 150 local elected and business leaders in attendance, and BE NKY team members have participated in many speaking opportunities to showcase and market our new brand.



KENTUCKY PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

A regional Northern Kentucky project that was submitted by BE NKY and the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) in the first round of funding from the revamped Kentucky Product Development Initiative (KPDI) was announced in December 2023.

KPDI funds will supply \$3.6 million in funding for the North Cargo project that included support from Boone, Campbell, and Kenton counties. The Boone County Fiscal Court, on behalf of the Kenton County Airport Board, will fund part of the construction of an air cargo warehouse facility with airside access at CVG. The total anticipated investment for the project is more than \$14.7 million.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Looking back on 2023, our BE NKY Growth Partnership team has so much to be proud of, starting with calling ourselves “BE NKY.” In March 2023, after much planning and collaboration, we successfully launched our new name and rebranding to overwhelmingly positive feedback.

The Northern Kentucky Port Authority, a managed entity of BE NKY, broke ground on the OneNKY Center in downtown Covington. This building will be the future home of the Covington Life Science Lab and multiple Northern Kentucky growth organizations, including BE NKY.

Our team continued to grow with the addition of a new Client Relations Specialist to our economic development team.

BE NKY was also the recipient of multiple awards, including an IEDC Gold award for our company website, an award from C2ER for the Northern Kentucky Atlas, a Mac Conway Award for Excellence in Economic Development, and being named a Best Places to Work finalist by the *Cincinnati Business Courier*.

We will kick off 2024 with our Annual Forum which will focus on Northern Kentucky’s competitiveness and future strategies to continue and improve our region’s prosperity. We will also release a population growth study. These reports, in conjunction with the housing study and workforce ecosystem analysis, will guide the development of a community strategy for Northern Kentucky with our many partners in the region. We want to ensure a bright future for our region.

We are excited to celebrate our project wins and successes at our Annual Forum, and we look forward to all the great things our team will accomplish in 2024.



**Lee
Crume**

President & CEO,
BE NKY Growth
Partnership

AWARDS

This year was filled with many successes for BE NKY Growth Partnership and the Northern Kentucky companies with which we work.

BE NKY Awards:

- 2023 finalist for *Cincinnati Business Courier’s* Best Places to Work
- 2023 Mac Conway Award for Excellence in Economic Development
- Two Excellence in Economic Development Awards from the International Economic Development Council: Gold Award in the category of “General Purpose Website,” Bronze Award for our 2022 Annual Report

- Two AMA Cincinnati Marketing Pinnacle Awards: 1st place in “Best Digital Strategy & Execution” and 3rd place in “Best Brand Launch or Rebranding Effort”
- BE NKY CEO Lee Crume was named one of North America’s Top 50 Economic Developers of 2023 by Consultant Connect

Northern Kentucky Atlas awards:

- Excellence in Economic Development Award from the International Economic Development Council: Silver

Award in “Special Purpose Website”

- Community, Economic and Workforce Development Applied Research Award from the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER)

Community awards:

- Skilcraft was named the Small Manufacturer of the Year by the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers
- Thermo Fisher Scientific named James A. Wuenker Award winner by REDI Cincinnati

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

BE NKY Growth Partnership (BE NKY), a nonprofit corporation under the auspices of the Fiscal Courts in Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties, is governed by a twenty-three member Board of Directors.

BE NKY Growth Partnership Board of Directors



James A. Dressman
Chair



Carey Sanders
Vice Chair



Ben Brandstetter
Treasurer



Normand Desmarais
Secretary



Tom Banta
Immediate Past Chair

Boone County

Judge/Executive Gary W. Moore

Ben Brandstetter, Treasurer, Brandstetter Carroll, Inc.

James Henning, Retired

Rich Elwell, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport

John A. Mocker, Jr., Lally Pipe & Tube

Campbell County

Judge/Executive Steve Pendery

Tara Halpin, Steinhauser Inc.

Robert Heil, KLH Engineers

Andrea Pirondini, Prysmian Group North America

Kenton County

Judge/Executive Kris Knochelmann

Tom Banta, Immediate Past Chair, Corporex

James Dressman, Chair, DBL Law

Garren Colvin, St. Elizabeth Healthcare

Rhonda Whitaker Hurtt, Duke Energy

Mayor

Joe Meyer, Covington

Additional Members

Dr. Joseph Chillo, Thomas More University

Normand Desmarais, Secretary, TiER1 Performance Solutions

Dr. Fernando Figueroa, Gateway Community & Technical College

Adrian Hothem, Camco Chemical Company

Kimm Lauterbach, REDI Cincinnati

James E. Parsons, Keating Muething & Klekamp PLL

Carey Sanders, Vice Chair, Fifth Third Bank

BE NKY Growth Partnership Staff

Lee Crume, President & CEO

Kimberly Rossetti, Vice President of Economic Development

Christine Russell, Vice President of Strategy

Cheryl Besl, Vice President of Marketing & Communications

David McAleese, Research Director

Angie Mulberry, Director of Business Retention

Rachelle Creager, Administrative Project Manager

Jacob Edmonds, Business Growth Manager

Mark Grauwelman, Real Estate and Project Manager

Kim Spreder, Workforce Development Manager

Devon Stansbury, Client Relations Manager

Jeremy Worley, Client Relations Manager

Riley McLaren, Client Relations Specialist

Lauren Mulcahy, Client Relations Specialist

Sydney Murray, Communications Specialist

THANK YOU

Thank you to Candace McGraw, John Hengelbrok, Dr. Ashish Vaidya, Mayor Tom Guidugli, Jr., and Colin Beynon for their service on the board of directors.



Candace S. McGraw
Cincinnati/Northern
Kentucky International
Airport



John Hengelbrok
W. J. Baker Co.



Dr. Ashish Vaidya



**Mayor Tom
Guidugli, Jr.**
City of Newport



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