

City Business News – April, 2018

Updated 4/18/2018

Development Activity

Manufacturing Jobs - In an analysis of the recently released U.S. Census 2012 Economic Census, Solon's manufacturing sector compared favorably to other communities in Ohio. In a sampling of 20 cities, including Ohio's largest cities and local communities known for their manufacturing presence, Solon ranked 5th in the number of people employed by manufacturing companies, just behind Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo and Dayton. The Census is taken every five years. In 2007, Solon ranked #6. Of the 20 cities included in the analysis, Solon was one of four that showed a gain in manufacturing jobs since the previous census.

First National Bank – Construction is underway for a 4,550 sq. ft. bank on the former Dairy Queen site on Aurora Road.



Enterprise Parkway - Arthur Road Development Company (Davis Development Group) demolished a portion of the 21,000 retail strip at 6050 Enterprise Parkway and renovated the remaining 8,400 sq. ft. The 3 acre site created by the building demolition has been split off for construction of **Townplace Suites by Marriott**, a 4-story, 101 room extended stay hotel.



May Ballot Issues - Omni Senior Living presented a request to rezone 5.38 acres from C-1 Historic Business and C-2 Restricted Commercial to R-3-A Senior Residential. The proposed project, Vitalia Senior Residences, would include a 4-story building with 90 independent living apartments and a 3-story building with 42 assisted living apartments and 18 memory care units. Council approved placement of the rezoning issue on the May, 2018 ballot.



The **Solon Board of Education** will seek approval of an 8.5 mill operating levy on the May ballot. After reduction of 1.6 mills due to decreases in a bond retirement fund, the net increase for property owners beginning in 2020 will be 6.9 mills or \$241.50 per \$100,000 of property value.

Rezoning Request - The owner of 31875-31975 Aurora Road submitted a request to create a new I-3 Industrial Auto Service zoning classification and to rezone 31875-31975 Aurora Road and other properties along Old South Miles in the new zoning classification. The I-3 zoning classification would permit automotive related uses, including body shops and general vehicle repair. The Planning Commission recommended that this issue be placed on the ballot. Council will hold a public hearing on 5/7/18.

Customer Service Improvements - The City will install software in 2018 to streamline the City's permit processes, code enforcement, and land management. The software will enable mobile inspections, online permit applications, and credit card payments for all departments.

Downtown Beautification - A \$475,000 project to beautify Route 91 from Bainbridge to Aurora Roads will begin this year. The retaining walls on Route 91 will be refaced with a thin brick veneer, and the fence along the top of the walls will be replaced. This project is the latest phase of the City's long-term Master Plan project to beautify the center of town, with the Fire Station and Veteran's Memorial Park having been completed several years ago. Bids will be considered at the April Public Works Committee meeting.



Infrastructure, Traffic & Safety Updates

In addition to information below, please [visit the Engineering Department page for project updates.](#)

Railroad Crossing – The Ohio Rail Development Commission is working with the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad to install automatic flashing lights and gates at the Camp Industrial Parkway railroad crossing by mid to late summer of 2018.

Aurora/SOM Intersection Improvements – Utilities relocation is underway. Bid opening is scheduled for 4/20/18. Improvements will include the addition of a lane on the east side of SOM Center Road to eliminate the split phasing of the traffic signal, allowing the intersection to operate more efficiently. Aurora Road east of SOM will be widened to add a northbound turning lane onto SOM, allowing for the full use of the two westbound through lanes. Storm and sanitary sewers will also be replaced on Aurora Road to Solon Blvd. ODOT will pay 90% of the eligible project cost, with the City to pay the remaining 10%. The City will pay 100% of all other construction costs.

Aurora Road Reconstruction Project – The City was awarded \$1,500,000 in safety funding to add a two way left turn lane from the Burger King/Giant Eagle drive to Liberty Road. The project will include a full reconstruction of Aurora Road within these limits that will include curbing, sidewalks, a multi-use path, and a traffic signal at Portz Parkway. Estimated project cost is \$5,600,000. The funding becomes available in State fiscal year 2021. A construction schedule has not been determined yet.

Gas Line Replacement on Solon Road - Dominion East Ohio Gas is in the process of replacing an existing 6" steel gas main with a 12" plastic gas main on Solon Road. The replacement is between 29500 Solon Road, west of Cochran Road, going east and tying in to the existing gas system in front of the Police Station at 33000 Solon Road.

Sidewalks in Industrial Area - Installation of sidewalks on Solon Road from Davis Industrial Parkway to Aurora Road will take place in late 2018 following the replacement of a Dominion East Ohio Gas gas line in the project area this year.

Sanitary Sewer Tap-in Fees - With the intent of encouraging economic development and based on Administration recommendations, Council approved a revised fee schedule for sanitary sewer tap-in fees for new construction and use changes in existing buildings. The revisions include additions of categories for current uses not found in the original fee schedule and lowering of some fees to better align with usage. Some of the business types that will realize reduced fees include restaurants with seasonal patio seating, barber/beauty shops/nail salons, and exercise/fitness studios.

Kudos



The **City of Solon Finance Department** received the Auditor of State Award with Distinction from Auditor of State Dave Yost's office for the City's 2016 annual financial report. The Auditor of State Award is the highest recognition presented to local governments and school districts based on submittal of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, timely and accurate recordkeeping and a clean audit report.



The Solon City Schools ranked #1 on Niche.com's 2018 Best Schools Districts in the U.S. The rankings are based on rigorous analysis of academic and student life data from the U.S. Department of Education, along with test scores, college data, and ratings collected from millions of Niche.com users.

For the third consecutive year, **Solon City Schools ranked #1** in the state for "performance index" on the State of Ohio's 2016-2017 school district report cards. Performance index is a key measure of student achievement.

The City of Solon ranked #29 on the 2017 list of the **50 safest cities in Ohio**. The list is published by the National Council for Home Safety and Security, a national trade association for licensed alarm installers, contractors and other relevant trade groups, whose mission is to further industry education and public knowledge about home safety and security. To identify the safest cities in Ohio, the Council reviewed the most recent FBI Uniform Crime Report Statistics, population data and internal research. The City is particularly proud of this accomplishment, as many of the communities on the list have smaller populations with little or no commercial or industrial presence.



Solon High School ranked #15 in Ohio and #386 in the country on *U.S. News & World Report's* 2017 list of best high schools. Solon was among 19 schools in Ohio and 500 in the country that received a gold medal ranking, indicating the highest level of college readiness. Schools are rated on student teacher ratio, college readiness, math and reading scores, and graduation rates.

Resources

Solon Police Department Community Outreach - The Solon Police Department strives to promote open relations between the department and the residential and business communities through a variety of activities. *Coffee with a Cop* offers the opportunity to share coffee and conversation with officers. The semi-annual *Citizens Academy* exposes citizens to many facets of policing. Alumni of the *Citizens Academy* may join the *Community Impact Advisory Board (CIAB)*, which serves as a liaison between the community and the department, helping maintain a positive relationship between the two. *Shop with a Cop* is a holiday tradition in which police officers escort deserving Solon children on a daylong shopping adventure. *National Night Out* is a crime prevention and safety fair featuring Police Department personnel, equipment, vehicles, the Police K-9 Unit, crime prevention organizations, food, and activities for children. Opportunities are available for community volunteers to assist with police sponsored activities. *CIAB* will seek input from businesses in the near future on how to promote better relations with the residential and business communities. For more information, please visit the [Solon Police Department web page](#).

Training to Grow Entrepreneurial Companies - The *Scalerator NEO Program* is for Northeast Ohio business leaders that want to grow their business and are open to learning new ways to do so. The cohort-based educational program is led by faculty from Babson College (#1 Entrepreneurship

School in the U.S.), Harvard Business School, Columbia Business School and other leading entrepreneurship schools and is a mix of peer-to-peer exercises and faculty-led workshops. The program focuses on three things: **C**ustomers, **C**ash and **C**apacity.

Scalerator NEO is now seeking candidates for the 2018 program (April – October). Thanks to support from the Burton D. Morgan Foundation and Richard J. Fasenmyer Foundation, the program is **free** for 15-20 selected companies (of any industry) with roughly \$5 million to \$15 million in annual sales. The CEO/Owner must commit to attending all 7 sessions and is welcome to bring as many others from their organization to any and all of the sessions. To learn more about Scalerator NEO and if it is right for your company, go to <https://www.scaleratorneo.org/what-we-do/>

Get Growing in Solon Small Business Loan – The City is partnering with the Solon branch of First National Bank to offer loan rate reductions on loans of up to \$750,000 for qualified Solon businesses. For information, please contact:

Richard Nickerson - First National Bank – 33425 Aurora Road – 440-914-3949

Energy Efficiency Services - The Greater Cleveland Partnership /Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE) offers a suite of energy services that provides businesses with solutions for reducing costs and improving overall energy efficiency. Their suite of services includes:

- Energy audits for your building - This program saves participants an average of 25-30% on their operating costs. No cost, comprehensive audit paid for by First Energy Ohio Utilities for buildings 10,000 – 150,000 square feet www.cose.org/energyassessment
- Green leasing – bridging the dialogue between landlord and tenant to achieve energy efficiency www.cose.org/greenlease
- Contractors who can help with your facility www.cose.org/energycontractors
- Leveraging an interest rate reduction and rebate solutions www.cose.org/energyrebates
- Reducing and managing gas and electric costs

Workforce Resources – The City offers a page on its web site to assist Solon businesses that are seeking employees. To be included in the listing of job openings, Solon businesses may contact Peggy Weil Dorfman with the following information: company name, address, phone number, contact person and job titles of available positions. [The listings can be found here.](#) For other workforce resources, [follow this link](#).

Business Seminars – Please visit the city's web site for a list of [business seminars and special events](#) sponsored by local economic development agencies.