



KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.II



Arts and Economic Development: Vital Partners

Think about some of your favorite Valley events: holiday markets at the old Ward Bakery and the Butler Art Institute, Youngstown Flea, Artists of the Rust Belt shows at B&O, Shaker Woods, and many more. It's a joy for all ages to see old friends and make new ones, eat delicious foods, chat with the makers, and see their beautiful creations. Along with contributing to our quality of life, these creative partnerships make strong contributions to the economic vitality of this city, supporting individuals and local businesses, and leading to future opportunities.

Loop Youngstown is working to open an arts and culture center, to provide space and support for local artists, along with engaging the wider community with connection and collaboration. The flame of creative cooperation burns bright through events like the ones above, and we are excited for the many artistic and economic benefits that Loop will likewise encourage.

The most recent Arts and Economics Prosperity study shares that "In 2022, nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences generated \$151.7 billion in economic activity—\$73.3 billion in spending by the organizations, which leveraged an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related spending by their audiences." This supported 2.6 million jobs, generated \$29.1 billion in tax revenue, and provided \$101 billion in personal income.

When we engage and support creativity in our communities, we are supporting economic growth, as well. Art is good business! For more info: www.loopyoungstown.org and <http://aep6.americansforthearts.org>
-Dirk van der Duim (LOOP Board Member)

K.O.'s Corner

As of my writing, we are in the last quarter of fiscal year 2024, hard to believe how fast time goes when you are having fun. It has been a tremendously successful 2024 at KO Consulting, LLC. Our team here at KO Consulting, LLC has grown this year too, so with lots of new and exciting projects being added to what we do, we have had to meet that growth by adding to our team.

Along with the added client growth, we are happy to have added recognition. None more so than me receiving the distinguished honor of being Business Advocate of the Year from the Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber. I was very proud to receive this award more so for my team than anything else. I may be the KO, in KO Consulting, LLC, but our success wouldn't exist without the team. Again, let me take the time to publicly thank them. I would not have received this award without them. Success doesn't come in a vacuum. It comes with the help of others. Again, thanks to Team KO and of course Josh Prest, of Prest Public Strategies.

As I'm thinking and writing about the shared success of my team, it brings me to a larger economic development point for our region. The Mahoning Valley will not complete our revitalization journey without approaching it as a team. I think our large economic development engines (Port Authority, Eastgate, The Chamber) have done a better job of working together, but we still need to fill the gaps at the non-profit and grassroots level. I know of the gaps and what needs filled because of the work we do with our clients. Our goal and role at KO Consulting, is to try and bridge the distance between the grass roots and the major players. That space in between is where real development can occur, development that accounts for the skill sets and needs of our residents, in a holistic way, that looks at economic development from job creation to safe neighborhoods and everything in between. Our work and goals in 2025 are to continue to be a bridge builder and fill the strategic planning role of where progress goes from ideas to implementation. Cheers to a wonderful 2024 and I can't wait to see what 2025 brings.





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Flavio's Government Exclusive

I'm excited to work on the development of Nebo Park in Struthers. The project includes the construction of a quarter-mile wheelchair accessible path and a new parking lot that will also be wheelchair accessible. The wheelchair accessible path will compliment the Struthers Unleashed Dog Park which opened at Nebo Park on August 17th of this year.

Enhancing the amenities available at Nebo Park will improve the recreation options available to residents in the Nebo Neighborhood and all of Struthers. Mayor Catherine-Cercone Miller is committed to improving the quality of life for all residents of Struthers and we're excited to help the city achieve those goals.

Kelsey's Non-profit Exclusive

KO Consulting congratulates partner Bridgeway Capital on the opening of its new Warren/Youngstown office. Several members of our staff recently attended a Meet and Greet to welcome Angelo LoCastro, director of the new office.

Bridgeway Capital is a CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution) with a mission to combat injustices and advance opportunities by building capacity, investing capital, and developing underserved areas to grow businesses and revitalize places. KO Consulting has worked with Bridgeway since early 2022, helping a number of small businesses and nonprofits in the Valley successfully raise funds for their projects and prepare for financing. We recently worked with Carter House (pictured), which provides transitional housing to formerly incarcerated individuals to help them achieve independence, financial stability, and successful integration into the community. KO Consulting looks forward to continuing to collaborate to advance our shared vision of a prosperous, equitable Mahoning Valley.



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Pat's Exclusive

On Monday September 23, I was happy to accompany to Washington, D.C. Mayor Catherine Cercone-Miller of Struthers, Mayor Mark Zuppo of Girard, and our colleague Josh Prest of Prest Public Strategies. Josh had arranged meetings with Senator Sherrod Brown, Congressman David Joyce, Congressman Michael Rulli, and with Legislative Aides to Senator J.D. Vance. Both Mayor Cercone-Miller and Mayor Zuppo had the opportunity to present the needs of their cities to the federal legislators and members of their staff.

Mayor Cercone-Miller had the opportunity to discuss an earmark request that will provide funding to expand the Struthers wastewater treatment plant, which is currently at over 98% capacity. The current situation is an economic development barrier for both commercial and residential growth.

Mayor Zuppo is looking for assistance to remove an earthen dam at Girard Lake and open the area for both commercial and residential development. Additionally, Mayor Zuppo raised the issue with the legislators of PFAS contamination and his concerns around the issue and the possibility of unfunded federal mandates to deal with these so-called "forever chemicals." KO Consulting, LLC and Prest Public Strategies are convinced of the need to put as many of our clients as we can in the same room with the elected leaders who are making funding decisions that impact people across the country.





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Hello, Goodbye

As Q3 has come to an end, we have had the opportunity to add four new team members to KO Consulting. With this addition, we have said our goodbyes to Dylan. Please enjoy this *Hello, Goodbye* section to learn about our new team members!

Matthew: Matthew is an Associate Consultant in the Government Department at KO where assists municipalities receive Local, State, and Federal grants. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the Ohio State University in 2023 where he focused on Urban Policy and Data Analytics. Beyond work and politics, Matthew is an avid Cleveland Browns and Ohio State Football fan.

Niko: Niko is an Associate Consultant at KO and a native of Howland / Warren, Ohio. Graduating from Youngstown State University in 2024, he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication (Persuasion) and Political Science (Pre-Law) as well as a Master of Science in Criminal Justice. When outside of the office, you will likely find Niko reading, hanging with friends, playing cornhole, traveling, or rooting for Cleveland (Go Guards & Browns!).

Carolyn: As an Associate Consultant at KO Consulting, LLC, Carolyn Overton specializes in communications and marketing strategies for clients in government municipalities, small businesses, and nonprofits. With a Master's degree in Professional Communication from Youngstown State University, she leverages her expertise in digital marketing, organizational communication, and strategic planning to help clients achieve measurable outcomes through clear, impactful messaging.





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Lisa: Lisa Viscusi is an educator, writer, and cultural curator. Originally from Pittsburgh and new to Youngstown, Lisa received her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from John Carroll University and studied at DePaul University while living in Chicago. Lisa has spent her career working in non-profit fundraising, education for all ages, and public arts and culture programming. She believes in the power of thoughtful, creative, and generative community-building.

Dylan: Building a firm with young talent, means one thing - the only constant is change. I know as I mentor and watch my associates grow, some are going to move on to the next chapter. I can reflect with pride as that happens. Dylan Henning, was our most recent associate to leave KO, for Law School. While I am proud of him for pursuing his dreams, he is missed. Dylan did so much for our non-profit clients, especially Will Respect, Inc. If it wasn't for Dylan, KO would not have had the growth we did. Thank you Dylan---and you are welcome home and back to the team anytime.





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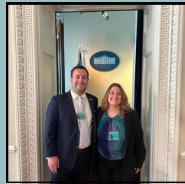
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Q3 Photos & Media

June



Dylan and Gina ran the Mahoning Valley Autism 5k at the Canfield Fairgrounds.



Throwback: KO Consulting & Prest Public Strategies take on the White House!



Thank you to Students Motivated by the Arts for the exceptional event.



Our team spent the week at the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber's D.C. Fly-in!



Team KO at the announcement of YWCA Van Wert County's Capital Campaign.

July



The Youngstown Air Reserve Station's 910th Airlift Wing welcomed the 1st C-130J Super Hercules Arrival.



We are happy and proud to sponsor Vinnie DePizzo, and it was great seeing him race!



Kristen and Gina attended the Kiwanis Club of Alliance meeting.



Team KO headed out to Alliance to support the YWCA of Alliance's annual golf outing.



KO Consulting is proud to be a partner and supporter in keeping the East end of Federal St. safer



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Q3 Photos & Media

August



Thank you to Congressman Rulli for taking the time out of his day to come tour Gabba Camp.



We are so excited to be a BBB Accredited Business.



KO Consulting was proudly represented at the Panerathon by Gina and Pat.



Team KO attended the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber's Salute to Business event. Kristen was awarded Business Advocate of the Year.



Kristen & Gina, along with all of Team KO is beyond proud of Josh for completing a 100-mile bike ride!

September



Here is our team from A Fresh Wind Catering's Ribbon Cutting this morning.



Our Trumbull County staff (plus our Struthers CEO) represented KO at the Chamber's Good Morning



Shoutout Mayor Cat for bringing in this amazing Struthers game-worn helmet.



Pat and Gina checked out Thrive Mahoning Valley's Ribbon Cutting and Open House.



Kelsey, Cara, and Niko had a wonderful time at Bridgeway Capital's Meet & Greet!

