



GRCA

**GREATER
READING**
Chamber Alliance



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY + INVESTMENT

THE CALL TO ACTION



Dear Economic Development Council Investors and Partners:

Greetings from GRCA! Our terrific Economic Development Team is hard at work serving our Berks business community and promoting economic growth through a myriad of impactful programs and services.

As you can see in the following pages, our experienced and dedicated team is aggressively engaged in implementing critically important growth strategies and initiatives in the areas of business attraction and retention, workforce development and training, and agribusiness promotion and marketing. Through our team's efforts, we are fostering a vibrant business climate and working to connect top quality employees with growing companies. In short, our team is achieving real world results, and your support for these initiatives is absolutely essential to our continued success in "building Berks together!"

Our future growth will be based on our collective investment today, and we are pleased to report that the Berks County Board of Commissioners is once again providing strong financial support for our 2021 efforts. However, to fully fund our work for the year, we need significant private-sector support as well. So, please take a moment to peruse this publication and the Investor membership information on the concluding page. Your Investor support is much-needed if we are to accomplish our 2021 economic development goals and priorities. We hope that you will find this work compelling and worthy of your financial support at one of the Investor membership levels.

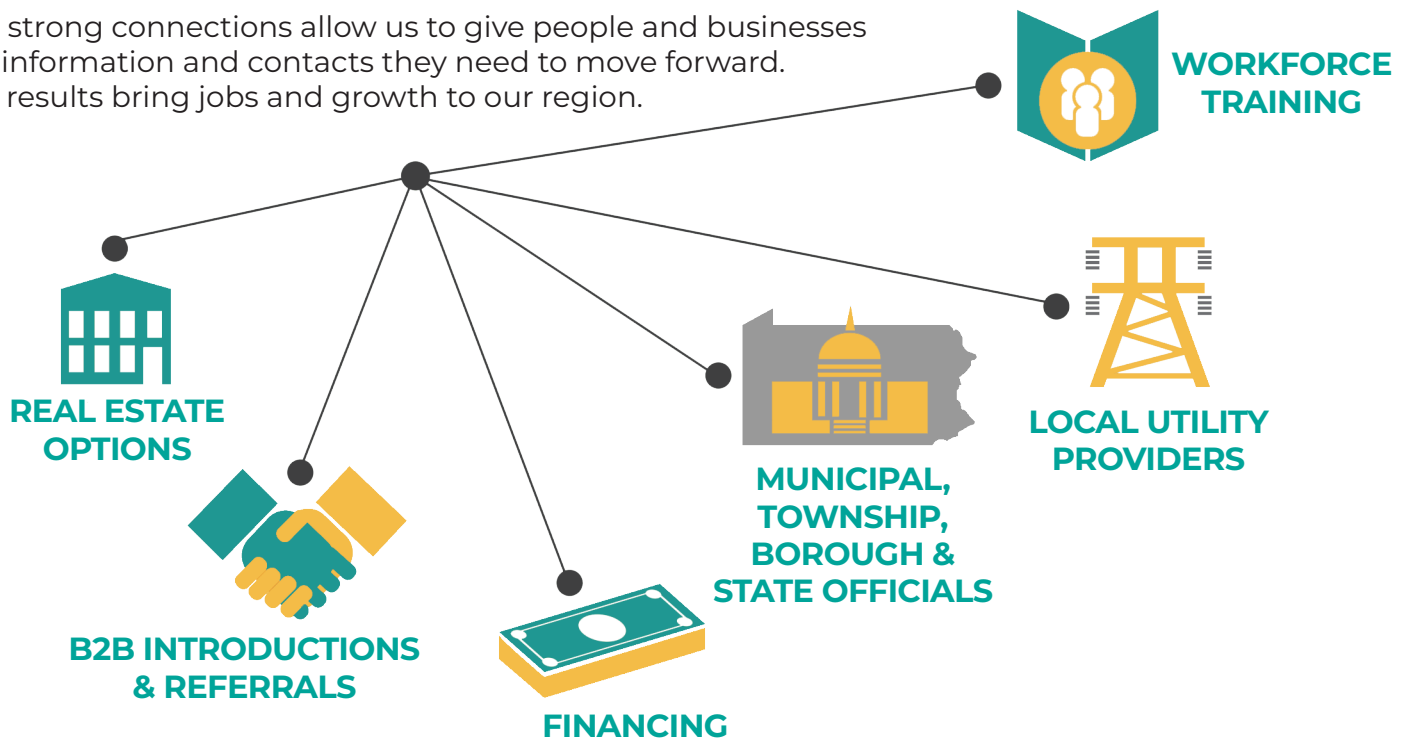
Thank you for your interest in and support for a future of unparalleled economic growth in Berks County!

Jim Gerlach
President & CEO, GRCA

WHAT WE DO

The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) markets Greater Reading to attract new businesses to our area and ensure existing businesses stay here.

Our strong connections allow us to give people and businesses the information and contacts they need to move forward. The results bring jobs and growth to our region.



GRCA Resources

- Facilitated process and information gathering
- Planned tours of our community and properties
- Access to workforce development resources and training programs
- Access to funding and incentive packages
- Mapping and customized workforce analysis
- Wage and salary information
- Regional data and demographics
- A comprehensive database of available office, commercial and industrial properties
- Introductions to service providers, business leaders and human resource professional

THE PLAN

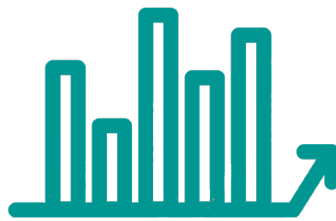
The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) is positioning our community for economic development growth in 2021 and beyond.

Organizationally, we are positioned to not only advance the interests and needs of our Chamber-based members, but to also lead, strategize and carry out critical economic development initiatives on behalf of the Greater Reading business community.

The GRCA has a dedicated economic development team with extensive and diversified expertise. **This team is strategically focused on the following areas:**



Business Attraction



Business Retention & Growth



Financing & Real Estate Development



As an organization we have a variety of tools and resources that include:

- Certified economic development organization (CEDO) for Berks County, enabling the organization to access PA Department of Community & Economic Development funding programs
- Federal and State designated Certified Development Financial Institution (CDFI)
- The coordinator of the Keystone Opportunity Zone, Keystone Innovation Zone and Greater Reading Enterprise Zone (still active and likely to be reauthorized)
- The administrator of Foreign Trade Zone 147
- Partner in Southeast PREP region through the PA Department of Community & Economic Development
- Commitment and investment in data research tools to support and respond to inquiries for relocations and expansion. One of those key tools for understanding the Berks County commercial and industrial real estate market is maintaining a database of available properties – GreaterReadingSites.com.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

In January, we launched a national economic development marketing campaign highlighting our best assets — our location, our people, and our lower-cost of doing business.

SelectGreaterReading.com

is a microsite highlighting our workforce, location, available properties, key industries with new and fresh content being added regularly.

The GRCA works to bring the necessary tools and resources to the table to help companies grow their business. Whether a company is seeking information to better understand its customer, looking for a property to accommodate relocation or expansion or requires assistance with local municipalities, our team has the resources to make it happen. **Select Greater Reading. Grow Here. Thrive Here.**

Did you know?

GRCA serves as the primary point of contact for site selectors, real estate professionals, developers, Pennsylvania Governor's Action Team and Pennsylvania Office of International Business Development for all inquiries for new and expanding businesses.



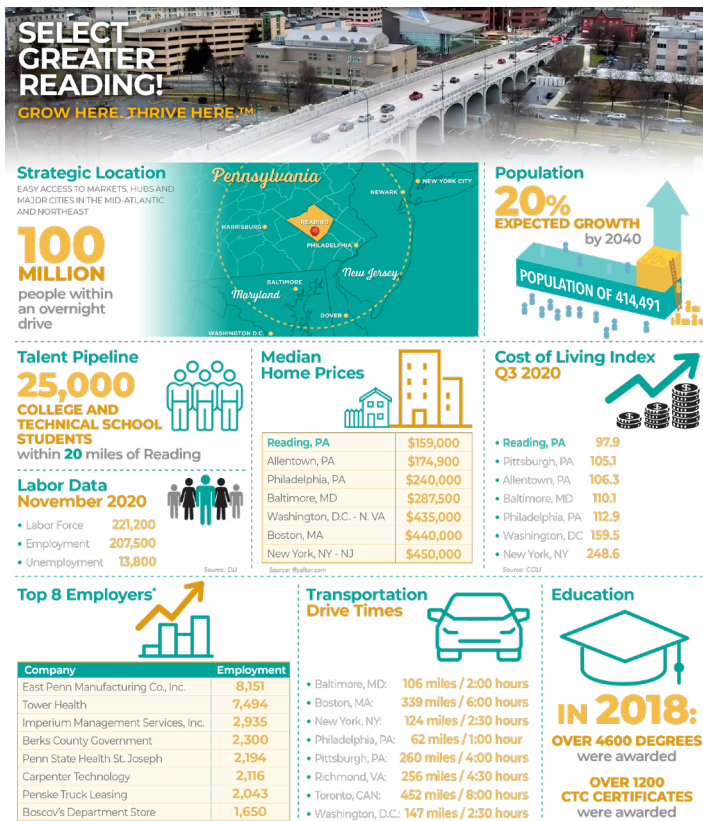
2020 Stat

➔ Manage + maintain **90+** commercial & industrial property listings on GreaterReadingSites.com

GRCA supports the economic development efforts of all Berks County municipalities — with a special focus on our Main Street communities and the City of Reading. The City's economic development success is our community's success — over the last three years GRCA has been focused on economic development in the downtown area and beyond.

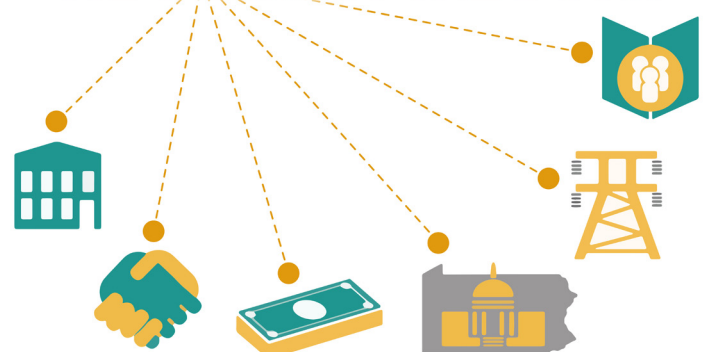
Our strategies include leveraging the investment and momentum of redevelopment projects such as Alvernia University's CollegeTowne and the Knitting Mills ongoing redevelopment in West Reading and Wyomissing.

Restoration of passenger rail to the Reading area is a critical long-term economic development priority. GRCA is working collaboratively with the Berks Alliance, County of Berks, and neighboring counties to bring this needed service to our community.



Select Greater Reading campaign ▼

FINANCING. REAL ESTATE. WORKFORCE.
WE CONNECT THE DOTS.

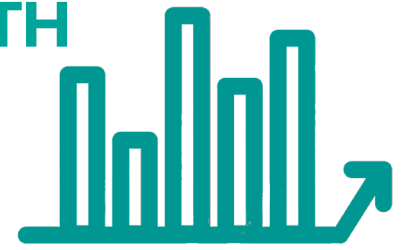


SELECT GREATER READING!
GROW HERE. THRIVE HERE.™

BUSINESS RETENTION & GROWTH

GRCA will continue to focus on both the retention and growth of Greater Reading's existing businesses. We will do this through Pennsylvania's Engage program and Next Gen Industry Partnership. In addition, we will continue to deploy information and resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Just as important as location is our most important asset — our people — who make up the talent and workforce in our community. The ability to successfully attract AND retain talent in Berks County is critical to our continued economic development growth. We are addressing talent attraction and retention on a few fronts like the Meet Greater Reading campaign and toolkit to highlight the Greater Reading community as a great place to live, learn, work and play. In addition, we are working with existing local companies and partner organizations to continue to develop proactive solutions to address talent challenges and opportunities. And

included in these efforts are first-class and timely management training services to upgrade critically important skills in the workplace. The agriculture industry also remains a leading economic driver in Berks County and, as such, will continue to receive targeted support including — attractive financing opportunities, collaboration with Berks Agricultural Resource Network (BARN) and the Berks County Department of Agriculture to provide marketing and promotional support to the industry with emphasis on smaller operations.



2020 Stats

- **80** Engage Visits with existing Berks County companies
- Delivered **93** trainings to over **1,500** people



Meet Greater Rdg Facts

- 7,500** copies circulated
- 500,000** community visitors, residents and business leaders reached
- 2,000** businesses reached
- 10,000** social media followers
- Digital edition to reach thousands of web visitors
- Digital platform and employer talent attraction kit

FINANCING & REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

The financing and real estate development work GRCA manages and undertakes ties the attraction and retention work the organization does together.

GRCA, through Greater Berks Development Fund, is the Certified Economic Development Organization for Berks County, and thereby provides access to programs that can offer grants and low-interest financing to make projects happen. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA) financing program
- Industrial Sites Reuse Program (ISRP) for assessments on numerous projects throughout the County
- Commonwealth Financing Authority to apply for Building PA and Business IN our Sites (BIOS)
- Pennsylvania Minority Business Development Authority (PMBDA)
- Pennsylvania Community Development Bank (PCDB) to use in local projects

We continue to explore unique real estate opportunities across Berks County. The primary intent of this work is to provide ready-to-go industrial land to present as options for Berks County businesses looking to expand or relocate. And we will continue to seek to identify projects that will meet that need.

2020 Stats

- **17** loans totaling over **\$6.2 million** in loans leveraging more than **\$17 million** of investment
- **33** COVID-19 Working Capital Access (CWCA) Program loans submitted on behalf of Berks County companies



We feel blessed by the growth we've experienced at Plum Creek and believe this expansion will allow us to continue to cheerfully serve our customers and community for many years."

Keith Zimmerman Plum Creek Owner

In 2019, Plum Creek Farm was approved for a \$1 million, 15-year real estate loan through the Greater Berks Development Fund in partnership with Tompkins VIST Bank for the construction of a new, 12,000-sq.-ft. building. The project was completed in 2020.



Fisher Family Farm ▼



THE TEAM

Debra L. Millman, Esq.

*Vice President
of Development*

Deb has worked in the economic development field for over 25 years, currently holding the position of Vice President of Development. She leads the Community Initiatives Team at GRCA, which oversees all business attraction and retention work, financing efforts, real estate projects and development work. Deb is Vice President of the Greater Berks Development Fund, the certified economic development organization for Berks County.



She graduated from Seton Hall University with a B.S. in Finance. Deb earned her Juris Doctorate from Widener University Law and is a licensed attorney in Pennsylvania. She is recently been appointed to the Berks County Workforce Development Board.

Deb has resided in Berks County since 1995. She lives in Exeter Township with her husband Ken. They have two sons — Andrew and Jacob.

Contact:

DMillman@greaterreading.org
610.898.7798

Aaron C. Gantz, MPA

*Senior Director
of Economic Development*

Aaron brings over 10 years of economic development experience to her position. She works with both the public and private sectors to enhance and facilitate economic development opportunities across Berks County.



Aaron is a native of the City of Reading. She graduated from West Virginia University where she earned both her B.A. in Political Science and Master of Public Administration degrees. She serves on the Reading Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors and West Reading Borough Economic Development Committee.

Aaron resides in Wyomissing with her husband John and daughter Wyatt.

Contact:

AGantz@greaterreading.org
610.898.7788

Landon Bernheiser

*Director of Real Estate
& Special Projects*

Landon works with Berks County businesses to facilitate the management, sales and leasing, and development of GRCA's real estate holdings. In addition, he has recently joined the finance team in which he facilitates and services PIDA loans and Grants to the Berks County businesses and farms.



As a Berks County native and with a passion for sustainability, he believes in Berks County's thriving business and Ag sectors, to continue to support and grow our local communities.

Landon graduated from Elizabethtown College with a B.S. in Business Administration and M.S. in Organizational Leadership from Norwich University. He holds a Real Estate Salesperson-Standard License# RS319853, through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of State.

Landon currently resides in Spring Township with his wife Deb. They have three children — Briana, Cole and Skyler.

Contact:

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610.898.7792

YOUR INVESTMENT

I. Silver Investor Level: \$1,000-\$4,999

Benefits:

- Invitation to quarterly Economic Development Council meetings
- Regular Council reports and updates on Economic Development programs and projects

II. Gold Investor Level: \$5,000-\$9,999

Benefits (All Silver Investor benefits plus):

- Membership on Economic Development Council Leadership Roundtable
- Invitation to two additional (Spring and Fall) Leadership Roundtable Meetings to review and discuss top County projects and priorities, and advise on future GRCA economic development programming and community investment projects.

III. Platinum Investor Level: \$10,000+

Benefits (All Gold Investor benefits plus):

- Company logo recognition on GRCA Economic Development Council Leadership Roundtable and main website
- Company recognition/signage on Economic Development Council Leadership Roundtable-funded community projects*

* In addition to supporting the various programs and initiatives outlined in this publication, for all Investor funds raised over \$200,000 this year, 15% of those additional funds will also be used to support such other community projects as recommended by the Council's Leadership Roundtable.

