

MAHONING VALLEY MARKET PULSE

Issue #3 • Week of March 23, 2026
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Trusted insight for business development and growth in the Mahoning Valley.

FROM THE EDITOR: The Mahoning Valley is in the middle of a generational transformation — \$12B+ in active capital commitments, a tightening labor market, and a housing supply gap racing to catch up. This week: Youngstown unveils a five-year economic development strategic plan, \$3.35M in state workforce housing grants land in the Valley, the Innovation Hub awards its first IP grants, and oil production in the Utica hits a state record — all while the Strait of Hormuz crisis reshapes energy economics for every player in the shale patch.

All items from the current publication week were sourced Mar 16–22 unless marked **[ONGOING]** for developing stories from prior weeks. Capital Pipeline Tracker and Economic Indicators are cumulative reference tables updated weekly.

ON DECK — MARCH 23–29

- **Mon, Mar. 23 — Chamber Corporate Pinball Challenge (Noon–4 PM):** Team-based member networking event as Q1 closes. [Regional Chamber](#)
- **Tue, Mar. 24 — Trumbull County Commissioners Meeting (10:30 AM):** Regular session, county administration building 5th floor. Agenda may include K-C infrastructure and CDBG items. Public via Zoom (ID: 858 3408 4865). [Trumbull County](#)
- **Tue, Mar. 24 — Golden Triangle Infrastructure Bids Due (Before 2 PM):** Sealed bids close for Contract A, tied to the Youngstown Air Reserve Station Military Installation Sustainability Project. [Trumbull County Planning Commission](#)
- **Wed, Mar. 25 — Trumbull County Commissioners Workshop (10:30 AM):** Workshop session at the county administration building. [Trumbull County](#)

HOUSING & WORKFORCE

- **\$3.35M in REDD Grants Hit the Valley (Mar 6).** Gov. DeWine awarded \$2.5M to Youngstown for up to 220 infill workforce housing units (100% 15-year tax abatement, Land Bank lots) and \$851K to Warren's Peninsula Project (306 units) — both tied to Ultium Cells demand. [BJD](#) · [Governor.Ohio.gov](#) · [WKBN](#)
- **Youngstown Ranked #4 Nationally for Starter Homes (Mar 18).** House Buyers of America placed the Youngstown metro fourth on its 2026 list: \$162,557 avg sale price, 44.86% five-year appreciation, 67 median days on market. [BJD](#)
- **Chamber Spotlights Housing Shortage (Mar 19).** Brenda Linert of the Regional Chamber says demand outpaces supply at nearly every price point; some relocating workers live outside the region. The Chamber's housing council targets 1,000 new units over five years. [BJD](#)
- **Ohio Brownfield Remediation: \$88M Available for FY2026.** \$1M reserved per county across all 88 Ohio counties; eligible for demolition, infrastructure, and remediation at industrial/commercial properties. [Ohio EPA](#)
- **Lawrence County HOME Rehab Funding (Jan 2026).** \$750K release-of-funds request for scattered-site owner-occupied housing rehabilitation across Lawrence and Mercer counties. [LCCAP](#)
- **[ONGOING] Land Bank Shifts from Demolition to Development.** Mahoning County Land Bank constructed 17 houses in 2025 on formerly vacant lots, with eight more nearing completion; brownfield remediation at the former Royal China factory (Sebring) is complete. [BJD](#), [Mar 3](#)

TECH & INNOVATION

- **Innovation Hub Roadshow Hits BRITE Energy Innovators (Mar 17).** Standing-room session at BRITE in Warren drew startup founders and small manufacturers to learn about the \$26M Hub — offering factory space (\$8/sq ft), nondilutive grants, workforce training, and DoD contractor pathways. [Vindicator](#)
- **Innovation Hub Awards First IP Grants (Mar 14).** The Hub's ~\$500K IP Generation & Technology Development call named awardees: Juggernaut 3D, LeapFast Manufacturing, and Agilis Air. [NCDMM](#)
- **Innovation Hub Phase One Renovations Target Summer 2026 (Mar 18).** Renovation of the mezzanine level of the former Vindicator building will begin late spring/early summer, with space for businesses by 2027. [WFMJ](#)
- **[ONGOING] ARC Rising Tides Initiative (\$1.795M to YBI).** Comprehensive advanced manufacturing technical assistance across Ashtabula, Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties, targeting microchip, defense, aerospace, and advanced energy industries. [ARC](#)

ENERGY & UTICA SHALE

- **Ohio Utica Oil Production Hits Record 48M Barrels in 2025 (Mar 13).** ODNR data: 39% YoY increase; volumes tripled since 2021. EOG's Wehr Valley well in Ellsworth Twp (Mahoning County) produced 69,660 barrels in its first two quarters, signaling the volatile oil window is moving north into the Valley. [BJD](#) · [Marcellus Drilling News](#)
- **Strait of Hormuz Crisis Reshapes Energy Economics (Mar 20).** EIA revised its 2026 avg Brent forecast from \$58 to \$79/bbl (Mar 11 STEO). Goldman raised recession odds to 25%. Gas prices at \$3.79/gal, highest since Oct 2023. S&P 500 down ~5% for March. [BJD Investors Edge](#)

- **PNC Economic Outlook: Steadier Footing, Slower Momentum (Mar 19).** PNC projects real GDP slowing to 1.7% in 2026, unemployment peaking at 4.7%, core inflation at 2.6%. Pent-up demand could reenter CRE markets as businesses regain confidence. [BJD](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Youngstown Unveils Economic Development Strategic Plan (Mar 20).** The Montrose Group presented a five-tactic roadmap to City Council's CPED committee: 500 new single-family homes by 2030, 500 acres of industrial land assembly, expanded ED staffing, and a streamlined business incentive guide. [BJD](#) · [WFMJ](#)
- **WRPA Sets September Demo for EGCC Parking Deck (Mar 19).** Bid-opening targets July, demolition September through December — clearing the E. Federal Street footprint for the \$60M Mahoning County Government Center (construction 2027). WRPA also approved advancing K-C road infrastructure via the \$17.2M All Ohio Futures Fund. [BJD](#) · [WFMJ](#)
- **Mahoning Bank Building Redevelopment Advances (Mar 19).** WRPA board approved a capital lease supporting the \$18.5M renovation of the 13-story Mahoning National Bank Building (71 apartments, commercial space) by 22 Market Street Ohio. [BJD](#)
- **[ONGOING] K-C Plant On Schedule; Road Design Advancing.** The \$800M Kimberly-Clark manufacturing facility remains on pace for H1 2027 production. The \$17.2M road/bridge infrastructure project (first phase design this year) will provide truck access to the Ohio Turnpike. [BJD, Mar 10](#) · [Vindicator, Jan 14](#)
- **[ONGOING] Electrical Contractors Report Strong Pipeline.** Mahoning Valley NECA and IBEW Locals 573/64 report rising man-hours from Kimberly-Clark, Foxconn, Amazon Bazetta, new school construction, and Mercy Health Champion ER. [BJD](#)

RETAIL & RESTAURANT BEAT

- **Beautiful Whirl'd Opens in Warren (Mar 22).** New locally-sourced wraps, smoothies, and salads concept prioritizing local produce. [Mahoning Matters](#)
- **[ONGOING] Variety Wholesalers Reopens Former Big Lots Locations.** Boardman and Warren stores operating under a "treasure hunt" discount format after Big Lots closed all locations. [WFMJ](#)
- **Handel's Ice Cream Names New CFO.** Youngstown-based Handel's Homemade Ice Cream appointed Naveen Dasa as chief financial officer — signaling continued executive talent attraction to Valley-headquartered companies. [NewsBreak](#)
- **Just A Matter Of Time?** Culver's is actively adding restaurants across the country, and continues to grow in the metro Cleveland area. Is the Valley on their radar?

HEALTHCARE

- **Unions Sue Insight Over Hospital Closures (Mar 16–18).** AFSCME and United Nurses filed a federal complaint (Northern District) and state court action (Trumbull County Common Pleas) to compel arbitration over alleged CBA violations tied to the abrupt 2025 closures of Insight Trumbull and Hillside Rehabilitation. Approximately 400 employees were affected. Insight surrendered its license in January but indicated intent to reapply. [BJD](#) · [WFMJ](#)

LEGISLATIVE & POLICY WATCH

- **73rd Harvey Awards + \$30K Chamber Check (Mar 19–20).** First tangible financial result of the January 2026 Columbiana–Regional Chamber affiliation; 7 businesses and leaders recognized. Joint programming planned: Salute to Elected Officials, Good Evening Columbiana!, Power Lunch, MVYP mixer. [BJD](#) · [WFMJ](#)
- **Ohio Brownfield Remediation: \$88M for FY2026.** \$1M reserved per county; eligible for demolition, infrastructure, and remediation at industrial/commercial properties. Administered through Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance. [Ohio EPA](#)

WATCH

East Palestine settlement class members: Epiq (the replacement administrator) is actively verifying property distance calculations and multiplier eligibility. Confirm your status directly with Epiq if you have not done so.

WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

- **Educator of the Year Dinner Signals Talent Pipeline Urgency (Mar 16).** The 2026 Mahoning Valley Educator of the Year Honors Dinner drew 400 attendees, honored 42 educators with five Golden Apple recipients. Chamber CEO Coviello: the Valley's \$12B+ capital surge will stall without parallel classroom investment. [Vindicator](#)
- **Teresa Miller Named "Something Good" Recipient (Mar 19).** Trumbull County Planning Commission honored Valley Economic Development Partners ED Teresa Miller for securing nearly \$30M in small business funding and \$35M in PPP support for 750+ businesses during COVID. [WFMJ](#)
- **PNC Doubles Down on Valley Workforce Development (Mar 19).** PNC Foundation's two-year, \$100K grant to the Regional Chamber brings total workforce investment to \$150K over three years, supporting the Assembly for Workforce Solutions and Population & Talent Expansion Council. [BJD](#)

Indicator	Value	Trend / Notes
Mahoning Co. Unemp.	4.5%	↓ from 4.7% (Oct '25); measured Nov 2025 (Ohio LMI)
Trumbull Co. Unemp.	4.8%	↓ from 5.1% (Oct '25); still above OH state avg (4.0%)
Columbiana Co. Unemp.	4.3%	↓ from 4.5% (Oct '25); Valley's lowest county rate
City of Youngstown	5.7%	↓ from 6.0% (Oct '25); measured Nov 2025
City of Warren	6.1%	↓ from 6.7% (Oct '25); measured Nov 2025
Regional Wage Trend	Rising	"More jobs than people" — WRPA Dir. Trevena (Q1 2026)
Ultium Cells Layoffs	1,334	Effective Jan 5, 2026: 484 indefinite / 850 temp; upgrades underway
YSU Spring Enrollment	11,804	↑ 2.2% vs. Spring 2025 (14th-day census, Jan 2026)
YST Starter Home Rank	#4 in US	House Buyers of America 2026; avg sale \$162,557 (published Mar 18)

Data source: Ohio LMI (ohiolmi.com), Nov 2025 release. Jan 2026 county-level data delayed due to federal BLS staffing disruptions. Next release est. Apr 2026.

CAPITAL PIPELINE TRACKER

Cumulative reference table updated weekly. Color key below.

Project	Investment	Jobs	Status	County
SoftBank/Stargate — Lordstown AI Hub	\$3B	TBD	Active Construction	Trumbull
Kimberly-Clark — Warren Mfg	\$800M	491+	On Schedule; H1 '27	Trumbull
K-C Distribution Center	\$160M	65	Board Decision Pending	Trumbull
Youngstown Innovation Hub — A&D	\$62M	450 by '29	Reno Start Summer '26	Mahoning
Graphite One — Weathersfield	\$435M+	TBD	Permitting Phase	Trumbull
Mercy Health — Champion ER	\$50M	75	Steel Rising; Q4 '26	Trumbull
Vallourec — Premium Thread	\$48M	40	Commissioning Q1 '27	Mahoning
EOG/Encino — Utica Drilling	\$6.5B	1,000s	3 rigs; record year	Regional
Ultium Cells (Lordstown)	\$2.3B	~900	Reduced Ops / Upgrades	Trumbull
Youngstown REDD Infill Housing	\$2.5M grant	220 units	Awarded Mar 6	Mahoning
Warren Peninsula Project	\$851K grant	306 units	Awarded Mar 6	Trumbull
Mahoning Nat'l Bank Bldg	\$18.5M	71 units	Renovation Active	Mahoning
Mahoning Co. Gov't Center	\$60M	400+ consol.	Demo Spring '26	Mahoning
EGCC Garage Demo	\$2.5–3.5M	—	Bids June '26	Mahoning
L2R Undisclosed Pipeline	\$3B+ (est.)	TBD	Multiple stages	Regional

Green = construction **Yellow** = planning **Blue** = awarded **Purple** = renovation **Red** = paused

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Mahoning • Trumbull • Columbiana • Ashtabula • Mercer • Lawrence

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