

## ***A Proven Approach to Help Businesses Survive and Grow***

The Business Resource Network (BRN) is a unique approach to help businesses survive and grow. It works closely with them to identify and access a host of business services with as little red tape as possible. The BRN operates in Trumbull, Mahoning and Columbiana Counties.

A collaboration of chambers of commerce, workforce and economic development organizations, universities, career & technical centers, state and local government agencies, the BRN partnership targets businesses with growth potential as well as those facing challenges. It then conducts in-depth interviews with the owners and managers of the businesses.

After learning a business's goals and the obstacles it may be facing, BRN Partners present the business with a package of suggested incentives, technical assistance, training and other programs designed specifically for that business.

This all happens through a single point of contact—the BRN Account Executive—assuring tight coordination of services and minimal bureaucracy. There is no charge for the interview and proposal and many services are available at no cost.

Once the business chooses the programs and services it wants to pursue, the BRN Account Executive continues to work with the business and **participating BRN Partners over time to deliver quality services and identify new ways to assist the business.**

## **Country Porch Winery Toasts BRN**



***Sheila Fisher and Deborah Beltz with a few bottles of their wine.***

Sheila Fisher and Deborah Beltz have been friends for more than 30 years and in a variety of business endeavors over the past 17, including distribution and fulfillment, farm markets and learning the wine industry from the ground up. About two years ago they started the Country Porch Winery in Cortland, producing all handcrafted local wines. Open year round, the winery offers tastings, retail sales, appetizers and a limited menu along with special monthly food events. The winery annually produces 15,000 bottles of 13 varietals of regional wines.

At present the winery is truly a hands-on operation with all the bottles being corked and labeled by hand. A more automated system is under consideration. Debbie and Sheila learned about safety grants from their BRN Account Executive and are currently in talks with the Bureau of Workers' Compensation about a safety grant to purchase a corking machine that would also label.

Never resting on past successes, Debbie and Sheila are planning to take advantage of the Kitchen Incubator, a local resource they learned of through the BRN, and can a gourmet blend of hot peppers. The peppers would be sold at the Country Porch Winery under a private label. They are considering expanding their building and adding a patio and will be looking to the BRN for connections that can help them with those projects.



**Rebecca Dearing Wall and Bob Christoff**

## Dearing Compressor's Team Includes BRN

Dearing Compressor & Pump Co.'s Human Resources Manager, Bob Christoff, likes to talk about his more than three years of "good relationship" with the Business Resource Network. But Dearing's relationship with the BRN started with his predecessor, Rebecca Dearing Wall in 2009. The company that produces air and gas compression equipment has had astronomical growth in recent years going from 40 employees in 2006 to 225 in 2014, mostly due to the emerging shale natural gas industry in the region. Bob said conversations with Magnet, a BRN partner, helped in managing that growth and he credits On-the-Job Training contracts and ShaleNet grants, both administered by another BRN partner, Mahoning & Columbiana Training Association, for helping with the

cost of training many of the new employees. His connection with the BRN led him to the Youngstown State University's engineering internship program. Dearing currently has an electrical engineering student and a mechanical engineering student interning at the Youngstown facility. Bob is in discussions with the Bureau of Workman's Compensation, another BRN partner, concerning grants for safety equipment for the company. Teamwork is a watchword at Dearing Compressor and Bob sees the BRN as part of his team.

### BRN Partners

Choffin Career & Technical Center  
City of Warren  
City of Youngstown  
Columbiana County Career & Technical Center  
Columbiana County Commissioners  
Columbiana County Development Department  
Compass Family & Community Services  
Congressman Bill Johnson's Office, Ohio 6th District  
Congressman Tim Ryan's Office, Ohio 13th District  
Eastern Gateway Community College  
Eastgate Regional Council of Governments  
Kent State University - Trumbull  
MAGNET (Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network)  
Mahoning & Columbiana Training Association  
Mahoning County Career & Technical Center  
Mahoning County Commissioners  
Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation  
Mahoning Valley Procurement Technical Assistance Center  
MYCAP (Mahoning-Youngstown Community Action Partnership)

ODJFS Veterans Services  
ODOT Jobs & Commerce  
Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
Ohio Development Services Agency  
Ohio Governor's Office  
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities  
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce  
SCORE (Counselors to America's Small Business)  
Small Business Development Center at Youngstown State University  
Small Business Development Center at Kent State  
Tuscarawas  
Southern Columbiana County Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Trumbull Career & Technical Center  
Trumbull County Commissioners  
Trumbull County Department of Job and Family Services  
U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown's Office  
West Central Job Partnership  
Western Reserve Port Authority  
Youngstown State University  
Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber

### Kelly Wetzler Joins BRN in Columbiana

Kelly Wetzler assumed the position of BRN's Columbiana County Account Executive in November and has hit the ground running. With a background in banking and insurance, Kelly brings more than 10 years of business experience to companies in Columbiana County.