



# 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT





# Message from the Chair

**Bob Heil**  
Chair, Northern Kentucky Tri-ED  
President & CEO, KLH Engineers

The Tri-ED team started 2020 strong with several new office headquarters announcements. As the pandemic took hold and the shutdown began in mid-March, we realized this year was not going to be business as usual.

Tri-ED quickly pivoted and partnered with the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce to assist the business community and provide key information regarding the CARES Act through a series of webinars. While continuing to serve our primary industry companies with over 1,000 outreach touchpoints during a two-week period in April, the team recognized that businesses of all sizes needed help. As a result, Tri-ED partnered with the NKY Chamber and Horizon Community Funds to launch the NKY Restaurant Relief program, which provided a much-needed infusion of cash to restaurants in our region.

Northern Kentucky saw new investment and growth in all corners of our three counties from Covington to Walton to Highland Heights and Independence in 2020. The 27 companies creating new jobs and investing in our three counties came from a diverse array of industries.

Tri-ED makes communication with our businesses, communities and partners a priority in order to learn about their concerns, share our insights, mark our successes and increase transparency about economic development in the region.

In a year like no other, with a pandemic and a significantly reduced budget, project activity was strong throughout the year and we are proud of the successes the team achieved. We believe the future is bright in Northern Kentucky and we believe strongly in the Tri-ED team leading our region's economic development efforts.

*Robert Heil*

## Steady Growth & Investment

**27 PROJECTS** 8% above our goal **\$72,500** Average Wage

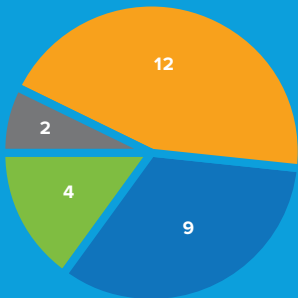
**1,563 JOBS** 87% of our goal

**\$268MM**

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT** 34% above our goal

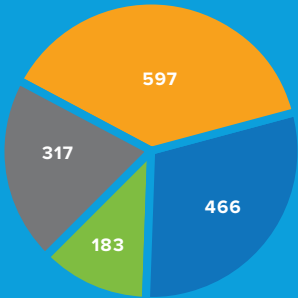


## A DIVERSE ECONOMY



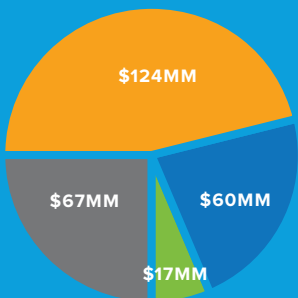
**Projects by Sector**  
27 projects brought new jobs and investment to Northern Kentucky with an average wage of \$72,500.

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Headquarters & Office
- Technology
- Distribution/Logistics



**Jobs by Sector**

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Headquarters & Office
- Distribution/Logistics
- Technology



**Capital Investment by Sector**

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Distribution/Logistics
- Headquarters & Office
- Technology

## NEW INVESTORS IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY IN 2020



### Gentis Solutions Moves to Covington

A new-to-market provider of tech talent solutions to high-growth companies, Gentis Solutions announced it would move to Covington in February. Tri-ED worked with Gentis early in its investment decision-making process as it evaluated locations throughout the Cincinnati region. The company invested **\$2.7 million** in its new headquarters in RiverCenter, opening its office in June, and committed to hiring **80** new employees. The talent in the region and central location in Covington were key decision factors for Gentis.

*“The business community and City of Covington welcomed us with open arms. So much so that it has accelerated our business. It’s been a great decision to open our headquarters in RiverCenter – it’s a beautiful building with amazing views that’s convenient for our employees and customers. Everything we need is within walking distance.”*

### Tom Flessor, COO.

Gentis Solutions is a five-year old talent recruitment company for major corporations in the Cincinnati region.



### Dollar General Invests in New Location in Walton

Dollar General added to its supply chain network in 2020 with the announcement of a new state-of-the-art distribution center in Walton. Tri-ED provided support and guidance with the State of Kentucky and the City of Walton for the **\$65 million** investment in a new 630,000 sq ft facility that will serve **800** stores. Dollar General has begun hiring for **250** position and plans an early 2021 opening.



### Protective Life Corporation Announces New Regional Office in RiverCenter

Protective Life, one of the largest insurance and financial services companies in the U.S., will bring approximately **100** high-paying jobs to Northern Kentucky in 2021. Leaders expect to more than double that employee count over the next decade. The company is investing **\$17 million** in the Technology Tower I of RiverCenter, in Covington, to establish a new core site. Tri-ED joined the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development and City of Covington to support and guide the company's location decision.

### The following are among the companies that invested and created new jobs in Northern Kentucky in 2020:

- |   |                                 |                                      |                 |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Aristech Surfaces, LLC                        | • Disabled American Veterans    | • M&M Service                        | • Road ID, Inc. |
| • Best Sanitizers, Inc.                         | • Gentis Solutions              | • Mazak Corporation HQ               | • Signode       |
| • Camco Chemicals                               | • Gravity Diagnostics, LLC      | • Protective Life Insurance Company  | • STEP CG       |
| • DG (Dollar General) Distribution Midwest, LLC | • Hilltop Basic Resources, Inc. | • Proxima Spirits                    |                 |
|   | • IT Supply Solutions           | • Regal Power Transmission Solutions |                 |

# COMMITTED TO GROWTH IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY



## IT Supply Solutions Grows in Independence

Tri-ED worked with IT Supply Solutions, a homegrown Northern Kentucky business, to secure state support for its nearly **\$1.9 million** expansion. The company serves the business and education communities by restoring computers and responsibly recycling (R2) hardware and equipment. The expansion will allow IT Supply Solutions to add **15** new employees and continue growing in the City of Independence.



## Camco Chemical Company Adds Packaging Lines and Distribution Space for More Growth

Camco Chemical Company, a leading supply chain services company providing turnkey chemical contract manufacturing, warehousing and fulfillment services, completed an internal capacity expansion of its facility in the City of Independence in February 2020 that grew its liquid blending and bottling operation. Camco also opened a new **100,000** square foot warehouse in the City of Florence in July. The new facility has allowed Camco to open up more space at its existing manufacturing facility that has resulted in the investment of three additional packaging lines in Q4 2020 along with the expansion of its workforce. Camco is making plans for additional facility expansion as well as investments in additional packaging lines in Q1 2021. Through the business retention and expansion outreach program, Tri-ED advised and supported both of the company’s expansions.



Devon Stansbury, Lee Crume and Kimberly Rossetti visit STEP CG’s new offices with CEO Ed Walton and Business Development Manager TJ Fugette.

## STEP CG Expands in New Covington Headquarters, Opens Innovation Center

Technology engineering firm STEP CG, LLC announced its expansion and hiring goals after an extensive search for a new headquarters location throughout the Midwest. STEP CG invested **\$5.3 million** in a new headquarters in RiverCenter and committed to create **83** new, high-wage jobs. The company opened its innovation center this summer, despite the pandemic, and was attracted to Covington because of the people and support offered to small businesses in addition to the cool vibe. Tri-ED began working with STEP CG on its location decision through the business retention and expansion outreach program.



Photo: Joe Simon

*“Aristech Surfaces, LLC was very fortunate to experience growth in 2020 and hired a significant number of talented employees to join our team. The support of community resources and partners in Northern Kentucky, including Tri-ED, was instrumental.”*

**Ruth Moore**  
Vice President, Human Resources  
Aristech Surfaces, LLC

Tri-ED was assertive with its business retention and expansion (BR&E) outreach program in 2020. The team met with 173 companies in person and a total of 4,781 touch points were made with 485 companies in Northern Kentucky.

## Companies access state funding for employee training

Tri-ED assisted six companies that received Bluegrass State Skills Corporation funds to enhance the skills of their employees.

ARISTECH SURFACES	JEWEL-CRAFT, INC.	KRAUSS-MAFFEI CORP.	LEANCOR, LLC	STAIRTEK	STEINKAMP MOLDING LP
178 employees assisted	30 employees assisted	78 employees assisted	75 employees assisted	36 employees assisted	14 employees assisted

# COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

Tri-ED partnered with the NKY Chamber on webinars on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and CARES Act, calls with Congressional delegation staff and the NKY Restaurant Relief program to provide support to businesses of all sizes as the pandemic and government shutdowns began in late March. Tri-ED made more than **1,000** touchpoints with over **500** primary industry companies in late March and early April providing businesses with the resources they needed.

The NKY Restaurant Relief program spurred gift card sales for our region’s restaurants in April and May. Grants and gift card purchases provided an infusion of **\$94,000** into more than **120** restaurants and bars in the region. The restaurant and bar owners were so grateful for the effort and funds they received throughout 2020.



## Community Support and Outreach

The Tri-ED team supported the Fort Mitchell Small Business Grant Program by reviewing the applications for a **\$2,500** grant as they were submitted online and reaching out to businesses about their documentation and answering questions. Grants for **34** businesses were announced on April 24 and dispersed less than a week after the program was announced providing needed funds to small businesses.

The Tri-ED team made outreach to communities and economic development partners, such as utilities, education and career organizations, a priority in 2020.

131  
MEETINGS

## CEO Roundtables

Through conversations with more than two dozen business leaders this summer, Tri-ED gleaned an understanding of how COVID-19 affected primary industry operations, workforce and projections for 2020 revenues, growth and recovery. Diversity, inclusion and equity initiatives within the companies and the region were also discussed. Tri-ED learned that the majority of the companies were operating and hiring and that workforce is still a top priority for the region.

87%  
MAINTAINED FULL  
EMPLOYMENT  
AND WERE HIRING

## Blue North Serves Entrepreneur Community as Independent Organization

Blue North, created by Tri-ED in 2019, serves and connects entrepreneurs in the eight-county NKADD district. Building on the strong partnerships and foundation developed in collaboration with Tri-ED, Blue North evolved and this summer it became an independent organization. Tri-ED and Blue North secured a **\$510,000** RISE grant from the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development’s (KCED) Office of Entrepreneurship, helping to fund services to startups and small businesses in the region.



Photo: Joe Simon

Bluegrass  
Northern  
Kentucky

# REGIONAL GROWTH FROM LEADING COMPANIES

These members of the Northern Kentucky business community grew and added hundreds of new jobs in the region in 2020.

amazon.com  
120 NEW JOBS

FedEx  
700 NEW JOBS

Charter  
Spectrum  
175 NEW JOBS

Fidelity  
INVESTMENTS  
550 NEW JOBS



## Strategic Focus on Progress

The Tri-ED team is concentrating on our core mission of attracting new companies to the region and supporting the growth of our existing businesses. The continued growth and success of our companies and communities depend on the following:

- Population growth
- A trained and available workforce
- A positive and competitive business climate
- Available, development-ready sites and buildings
- A thriving startup ecosystem

Tri-ED is working with many partner organizations to make progress on these key drivers that will positively impact the region’s future. Three areas that Tri-ED will lead are:

- Developing a community dashboard to ensure data guides decision-making in our community. The dashboard will benchmark Northern Kentucky and the Cincinnati region against a mix of peer and aspirational cities in the U.S.
- Creating a strategy to ensure land that is ideal for our clients is put to the best use and brings the best jobs to our region.
- Analyzing incentive policies in other multi-state regions to consider legislative changes.

2020 was a successful year for Northern Kentucky Tri-ED and we are looking forward to working with our communities and bringing new jobs to our region in 2021.

Lee Crume, President & CEO  
Northern Kentucky Tri-ED

# LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Tri-ED, under the auspices of the fiscal courts in Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties, is governed by a board of directors.

## NORTHERN KENTUCKY TRI-ED BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Bob Heil, Chair**



**Tom Banta, Vice Chair**



**Candace McGraw, Secretary**



**James A. Dressman III, Treasurer**

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Ben Brandstetter, Brandstetter Carroll, Inc.  
John H. Hawkins, Pathfinder – MPI Consulting  
Candace McGraw – Secretary, Cincinnati /  
Northern Kentucky Intl. Airport  
Rhonda Whitaker Hurtt, Duke Energy

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Bob Heil – Chair, KHL Engineers  
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Tom Banta – Vice Chair, Corporex Companies, LLC  
Garren Colvin, St. Elizabeth Healthcare  
James A. Dressman III – Treasurer, DBL Law  
Karen Finan, OneNKY Alliance

## THANK YOU

Tri-ED expresses our deep appreciation to Aaron Bludworth for his years of service on the board of directors and various committees.

We are grateful for Mayor Greg Meyers' service on the board of directors in FY2020.



**Aaron Bludworth,  
President & CEO, Fern**



**Greg Meyers,  
Mayor, City of Highland Heights**

### Entrepreneurship

Normand Desmarais, TiER1 Performance Solutions

### Gateway Community & Technical College

Dr. Fernando Figueroa

### Logistics

Colin Beynon, DHL Express, Americas CVG Hub

### Manufacturing

Adrian Hothem, Camco Chemical Company

### Mayor

Jude Hehman, City of Fort Mitchell

### Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

James Parsons, Keating Muething & Klekamp PLL

### REDI Cincinnati

Kimm Lauterbach

## TRI-ED STAFF

Lee Crume, President & CEO

Kimberly Rossetti, Vice President of Economic Development

Christine Russell, Vice President of Strategy

Cheryl Besl, Director of Marketing

Rachelle Creager, Administrative Project Manager

Angie Mulberry, Manager, Business Retention & Expansion

Allison Murcia, Research Manager

Devon Stansbury, Client Relations Manager

Jeremy Worley, Client Relations Manager

Jacob Edmonds, Economic Development Specialist

Lauren Mulcahy, Senior Intern