



EAST PALESTINE PROGRESS

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“We Will Not Forget You”

Vice President JD Vance led a delegation of Ohio leaders to East Palestine on February 3, 2025 to mark two years since the toxic train derailment. Vance was joined on his visit to East Palestine by his wife, second lady of the United States Usha Vance Esq., Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio U.S. Senators Bernie Moreno and Jon Husted and new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Director Lee Zeldin.

During the visit, officials toured key redevelopment sites, including the East Palestine Historic Train Depot and received updates on environmental monitoring, infrastructure improvements and economic revitalization efforts. They also met with residents, first responders and town leaders to hear firsthand about the progress made and the challenges that remain. Mayor Conaway and Fire Chief Drabick expressed their appreciation for the ongoing attention and resources directed toward the village.

Vice President Vance pledged his and President Donald Trump's support to residents who were impacted saying, “President Trump wanted to deliver a message that this community will not be forgotten, will not be left behind and we're in it for the long haul in East Palestine.”

To encourage residents, Vance said, “Don't give up on this community because we're not going to give up on this community. We will fight every single day to make sure you get the infrastructure, the redevelopment aid and certainly the health and environmental aid that you need to get back on your feet.”

Watch the full video of the speeches on epohio.org/news/videos/.



Village Offers Incentives for Investment

As a tool for encouraging economic and community development, the Village of East Palestine has the ability to incentivize property owners to build new buildings and homes, expand buildings and homes or significantly renovate buildings and homes through the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program.

Through the CRA program, property owners can receive a property tax exemption on the value of the "new" improvements (new construction or renovation value, not the existing taxable value).



Commercial and industrial properties need to apply for and receive approval for the CRA exemption *before* starting construction. ***Please note that the commercial/industrial CRA process will require fully completing an application with details of the project, notification or approval of the school board (depending upon the exemption level), approval by Village Council and executing an agreement. The approval process will take time and applications should plan accordingly.*** CRA exemption requests for commercial and industrial property improvements will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the *term and percent negotiated* between the property owner and village with upper limits being:

- Up to 12 years for the renovation of **existing** commercial and industrial facilities;
- Up to 15 years for **new** commercial or industrial facilities.

The village will consider economic impacts (new jobs, payroll, capital investment and other economic benefits to the community) when negotiating incentives. Financial impacts to schools, which rely on property taxes, will also be considered.

Application fees will be required for commercial and industrial properties.

Residential properties will be granted a 100% tax exemption on the increased assessed valuation resulting from improvements upon proper application by the property owner and certification by the village. Terms will be:

- 10 years for remodeling **existing** dwellings containing not more than two housing units, where the investment is a least \$5,000;
- 5 years for **new** dwellings containing not more than two housing units.

Residential applicants can apply after construction has started but must submit an application to the village within six months after construction is complete.

The entire corporate limits of the village are encompassed by the CRA, so any property in the village could potentially qualify. For more information on the CRA, please review the online application form. eastpalestine-oh.gov/government/building-zoning-department/

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Staff needed to assist with personal care and homemaker services for the developmentally delayed in Columbiana county. Starting rate is negotiable.
Please contact (330) 610-2481 for more information.



2025-2026 Preschool & Kindergarten Registration Now Open!

Preschool and Kindergarten registration for the 2025-2026 school year is now open. The Elementary and Preschool offices are open for registration on school days from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. **This is an online registration** with a follow-up visit to the appropriate office to provide required documents in person. **There will be no printed packets distributed.**

■ New Students Registration

Please follow these two steps to complete the enrollment process for **NEW students only**.

1. If you are **NEW** to the district you will need to create an account. Please fill out all of the online registration documents by using the FinalForms link on the district webpage myepschools.org
2. Once all of the forms have been submitted online, please bring the following to the registration office (right):
 - Original/Certified Birth Certificate
 - Immunization Records
 - Proof of Residency
 - Parent/Guardian Driver's License or State ID
 - Custody Paperwork or Court Documents (if applicable)
 - Signed Physician Medical Statement (for Preschool Registration ONLY!)

■ Existing Students Registration

Please follow this step if you have an **EXISTING East Palestine Preschool Student**.

If you have a Preschooler going into Preschool again or into Kindergarten for the 2025-2026 school year, please go into your FinalForms account and update your child for next school year.

Please **do not create a "new student" account**, since you already have an existing account. You will only need to update all of the registration forms.



PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION OFFICE

E-1 Door located at
200 West North Avenue
East Palestine, OH 44413

📞 **Kasey Kridler**
330-426-5306

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION OFFICE

E-9 Door located at
195 West Grant Street
East Palestine, OH 44413

📞 **Laura Boyer**
330-426-3638

Golden Friends Program

Bringing Hope and Connection to Seniors in Columbiana County

Run by the nonprofit Senior Support Action Group, Golden Friends is a peer-based in-home companionship program designed to reduce isolation and improve emotional well-being of homebound seniors in Columbiana County. The program connects trained volunteers (55+) with other seniors who are homebound, lack transportation or face challenges with driving, offering them much-needed companionship.

Seniors, who are trained as volunteers, visit their Golden Friends at least 2x a month to provide emotional support to their peers, fostering meaningful connections that enhance quality of life and reduce suicide risk. The volunteers are required to complete QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention training designed to teach individuals how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and respond effectively. Similar to CPR for physical health emergencies, QPR equips participants with the skills to intervene and potentially save a life.

"We recently trained about 10 volunteers from East Palestine's EP-GO group," noted **Paige Fortner**, Program Manager at Senior Support Action Group, "and we are now in the process of matching them with seniors who would benefit from their support. Volunteers receive a t-shirt, mileage reimbursement and more!"

Fortner is requesting help from community partners to:

- **Recruit Volunteers:** Help us find caring seniors eager to make a difference in their peers' lives.
- **Refer Participants:** Connect us with homebound seniors in Columbiana County who could benefit from companionship and support.

Learn more or get involved today. Call 330-271-6622 or email pfortner@fcsserves.org.

www.facebook.com/ssagohio





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85 North Market Street
East Palestine, OH 44413

PLEASE NOTE:

The March newsletter will not be printed but will be emailed and available online. To be added to the email list <https://epohio.org/newsletter-sign-up/>



EAST PALESTINE PROGRESS



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