



# EAST PALESTINE PROGRESS

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## The Village of East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)

The Village of East Palestine is taking big steps towards fostering economic development and revitalization with the establishment of the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC). Authorized under the Ohio Revised Code, the CIC is a non-profit corporation which will serve as the driving force behind these crucial efforts.

Under Ohio law, villages can do development, but it's harder and slower for them to do so. The CIC exists to undertake these activities in a timely and business-like manner. And the CIC is especially built to negotiate deals and sign contracts with developers and businesses allowing it to swiftly respond to the evolving needs of the community. Its purpose is to work alongside the village to accomplish development goals and to spearhead transformative initiatives.

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### COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (CIC) CAN:

	ENTER INTO DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS
	TAKE ON DEBT/ISSUE DEBT
	BUY/OWN/LEASE/SELL PROPERTY
	MAKE LOANS FOR DEVELOPMENT
	RECEIVE AND MAKE GRANTS

*Specific terms may apply to these abilities under Ohio Revised Code.*

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## The Village of East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)

Abilities include but are not limited to:

- Entering into strategic economic development agreements with county or municipality.
- Borrow money for economic development projects through traditional means.
- Manage debt.
- Purchase or dispose of property.
- Operate a revolving loan fund for economic development projects.
- Serve as an agent for grant applications and administering grants.
- Make loans to any person, firm, partnership or corporation.

\*Specific terms may apply to these abilities under Ohio Revised Code.

Formally registered with the State of Ohio, the CIC is in the process of securing a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit designation from the IRS, further cementing its commitment to serving the public interest. Transparency and accountability are paramount to the CIC's operations. The corporation will hold public meetings and adhere to state audit requirements, ensuring that its actions remain aligned with the community's priorities and values. Through strategic partnerships, innovative initiatives, and a steadfast commitment to progress, the CIC aims to unlock the full potential of East Palestine. The goal is to create a vibrant and thriving community for generations to come.

## Introducing Melissa Hiner: Our New Finance Director

Please extend a warm welcome to our new village Finance Director, Melissa Hiner. Originating from Lisbon, Melissa brings with her a deep understanding of the values and needs of our local area. She joins us after serving as the Deputy Auditor of the City of Salem, Ohio, where she dedicated herself to ensuring fiscal responsibility and transparency from April 2012 to October 2023. Melissa brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record in municipal finance, making her an excellent fit for our community.



**Melissa Hiner**  
Finance Director

"I'm excited to be working for the Village of East Palestine. My previous work experience made this an easy transition," said Hiner.

## East Palestine Street Fair Sponsored by East Palestine Chamber of Commerce

- Wednesday, May 22 – Friday, May 24: 5:00 to 10:00 p.m.
- Saturday, May 25: 1:00 to 11:00 p.m.

Enjoy four days of rides, games, food, and fun for the entire family. Raffles will be happening each night and the final large prize of \$5,000 dollars will be raffled off Saturday. Event times could be subject to change, please check [epohio.org/around-town/](http://epohio.org/around-town/) and the village social media pages for up-to-date event information.

## Introducing the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) Board Members

Five members of the community have been appointed to serve as CIC board members. These individuals are all very knowledgeable in business practices, making them qualified to make strategic and financial decisions on behalf of the CIC to serve the village's best interests.

Thank you to these dedicated community members who have stepped up to the responsibility to aid in our path forward! Please stay tuned for more CIC information and updates.

### CIC Board Members:

- **Tom Povenski**  
Village Council Member  
Principal, Tapco Electric LLC
- **Dr. Jessica Rocco**  
Village Council Member  
Chiropractor and Owner,  
Well Adjusted Chiropractic & Wellness
- **Linda May**  
Village Council Member  
Retired
- **Chris Page**  
CEO, Threshold Residential Services
- **Tom Brittain**  
Owner, Brittain Motors

**COMING**  
May 22 - 25



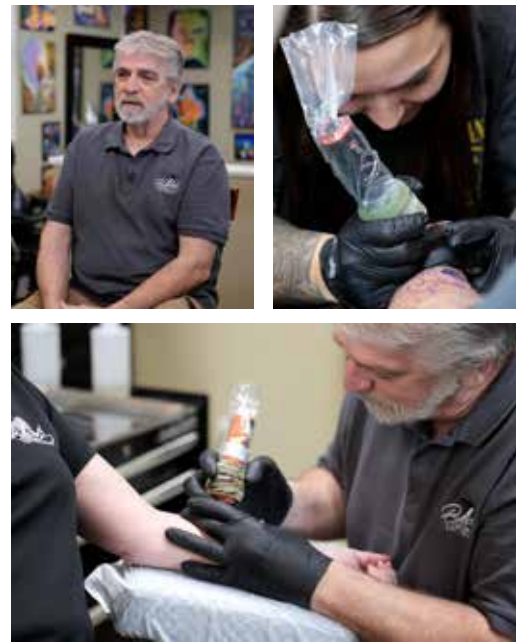
## BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT

### Bulldog Custom Tattooing Engineering Artistry Into Ink

This local tattoo shop is crafting up masterful custom designs. Bruce Riehl, owner of Bulldog Custom Tattooing has had a very diverse career path that brought him to opening his own shop. He worked as a mechanical engineer for 18 years and eventually shifted into real estate investing. This all changed when he purchased a house owned by a tattoo shop owner who encouraged him to take up tattooing after seeing his artwork. Bruce has always been artistic and enjoyed drawing as a hobby.

He decided to act on this passion and started a seven-month long apprenticeship at a tattoo shop here in East Palestine. His talents then took him to Wyld Chyld Tattoo in Pittsburgh to work under Ink Master's season 2 runner up, Sarah Miller. Bruce found his way back to East Palestine when he purchased the shop where his tattoo career began as an apprentice. The business expanded in 2016 to their current location managed by his wife Kay that houses eight stations and seven talented full-time artists.

"We really do have a good level of talent. Every artist is unique in their own way and has their own style. So, if you come to one artist with an idea and that artist doesn't feel comfortable with it, or if they think there's another artist in the shop that will do a better job, they're very quick to suggest that. I couldn't be prouder of our crew and the responses our customers give, once they have visited us. We continue to grow and look forward to meeting new clients!" says Riehl.



If you're interested in getting some new ink, contact Bulldog Custom Tattooing today.

[bulldogtattooing.com](http://bulldogtattooing.com)

Check out their artwork on their social media:



[Bulldog Custom Tattooing](#)



[Bulldog Custom Tattooing](#)

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: EP STUDENTS TAKE THEIR TALENTS TO NEW HEIGHTS



### Bulldog Band Takes Center Stage at Walt Disney World

This past March, the talented group of young musicians from East Palestine High School embarked on an unforgettable musical journey to Walt Disney World in Florida. With their instruments in hand and spirits high, the Bulldog Band paraded down Main Street, U.S.A. inside Magic Kingdom for a captivating performance. Under the direction of Band Director Jennifer Mollenkopf, the students showcased their passion for music to a diverse audience. Their unforgettable performance at Walt Disney World serves as a shining example of the talent and dedication present within the East Palestine High School music program.



*Pictured is the Bulldog Band.*

### Celebrating Academic Challenge Team Brilliance

East Palestine schools are home to a wealth of academic talent and recently the Academic Challenge Team has been excelling in National Academic Quiz Tournaments. The NAQT stands as the leading organizer of quiz bowl championships across North America spanning



*Row One: Alexis Kasunich, Abi Mollenkopf, Olivia Snedeker. Row Two: Ameila Persing, Heather Mohny, Mr. Jason Pancake (Advisor/Coach), Alex Mead, John Kinkead, Keller Bupp, Adam Davis, Sondra DeAtley*

from middle school to college levels. Among the standout student achievers, John Kinkead has been awarded Top Bulldog of the Year for outstanding performance and dedication to academic excellence. Keller Bupp has been honored with the Leadership Award, while Adam Davis has been named the "Star will Arise" for exceptional performance securing the 3rd highest points for the season. In addition to these prestigious honors, John earned his spot as the 2nd Team All-League NAQT for Columbiana/Mahoning County Small Schools. The NAQT have taken notice and personally invited John to compete at their National Championship in Chicago. Congratulations to all of the hard-working members on the Academic Challenge Team!





85 North Market Street  
East Palestine, OH 44413

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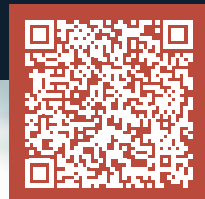


# EAST PALESTINE PROGRESS

This newsletter is a communication tool of the East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), a non-profit organization serving as the economic development agent for the Village.

## Give Back with Dog Days

Our annual day of community outreach and volunteering is on **May 18**, and we need your help. Dog Days is an opportunity to work together on projects around our village. That is what East Palestine is all about, a community working together to make a difference. Projects include cleaning, landscaping, building repair and more. If you're interested in volunteering, please fill out the Dog Days form at the Municipal Building or **scan the QR code below!**



## Consider Volunteering for Dog Days

There are few better ways to get involved with your community than to volunteer and offer your time to help others. The people who organizations rely upon to volunteer are getting older, me included. One of the common things you will hear at church breakfasts and nonprofit meetings is the need to get younger people involved.



**Chad Edwards**  
Village Manager

There's no better way to do that than to sign up for Dog Days, an event sponsored by the East Palestine Board of Education in partnership with the Village of East Palestine. Founded by Joanne Knight several years ago, it will be wonderful experience for both you and the community. Working side-by-side with the young people who will be in charge of everything someday is a reward in itself, but volunteering also gives you ownership in the project.

If you're free and able, come on out and join us. There will be plenty of different things to do and you can choose from a variety of projects. Just scan the QR code at left or contact the school or the village and we will help you out. I promise it will be a good time. See you on May 18th!



@villageofepohio