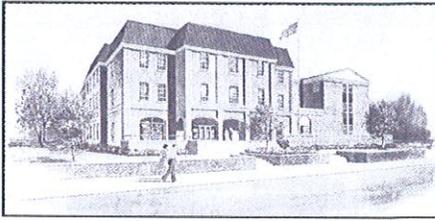


## Gallia County Commissioners

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*Brent Saunders, President*  
*Harold G. Montgomery, Vice-President*  
*David K. Smith, Commissioner*

*Office Staff:*  
*Karen Sprague, County Administrator*  
*Anette L. Brown, Clerk to the Board*

April 25, 2019

The Honorable Rep. Paul Zeltwanger  
Ohio House of Representatives, 54<sup>th</sup> District  
77 South High St., 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Zeltwanger:

The Gallia County Board of Commissioners would like to take this opportunity to express our support for the pending legislation that will reinstate the Rural Industrial Park Loan Program (House Bill 98).

Located in southeast Ohio with a population of just under 31,000, Gallia County has not experienced a significant recession recovery as seen in other parts of the state. Gallia County's current unemployment rate stands at 6.7% as compared to the State of Ohio's rate of 4.7%.

The site selection process, a major driver of economic growth, helps companies identify properties with necessary utilities and studies in place to minimize risk and maximize speed for industry. However, Gallia County is currently challenged with an inadequate inventory of quality, marketable light industrial buildings and readily developable sites for projects.

Due to this inefficiency, Gallia County is often unable to submit a facility or site for project leads, putting Gallia County at an even further disadvantage for economic opportunity.

Previous state programs, such as the Rural Industrial Park Loan Program Urban and Rural Initiatives, and the Industrial Site Improvement Fund, were utilized with great success to develop speculative sites and buildings in distressed areas of Ohio.

In 2009, Gallia County was awarded a \$750,000 Industrial Site Improvement Fund (ISIF) grant which assisted with the construction of a 20,000 SF speculative building within the Dan Evans Industrial Park. Gallia County experienced great success with this program and entered into a lease contract with Ohio Valley Trackwork to occupy the new building. Shortly thereafter, Ohio Valley Trackwork purchased an adjacent lot within the Dan Evans Industrial Park and constructed a second industrial building to further expand their business and create additional jobs.

Unfortunately, since that time, no programs have been in place to fund such initiatives. Reinstatement of this critical funding opportunity will not only bring positive transformation to Gallia County, but by directing assistance toward distressed areas, Ohio will have a strong return on investment for the state.

The Gallia County Commissioners strongly urge you to support House Bill 98 to reinstate the Rural Industrial Park Loan Program to provide economic opportunity for our community.

Sincerely,



Brent Saunders  
President



Harold Montgomery  
Vice President



David K. Smith  
Commissioner

cc:

Vice Chair Powell

Ranking Member Sobecki