

Point, and across the river in nearby Wheeling, West Virginia provide economical transportation to cities on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers such as Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans. And from New Orleans' deepwater port, Belmont County freight serves world export markets.



Belmont Technical College helps meet educational and work force development needs of the county and entire Ohio River Valley region.

With the Ohio River to the east and Lake Erie to the north, Ohio is actually the nation's fourth-largest maritime state!

There's full rail service, too. Major rail lines run the length of the county, and the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad provides excellent regional rail service — and connections to Class I lines throughout the area. Both railroads also serve several nearby intermodal facilities, including those on the Ohio River.

Rounding out the transportation array are air passenger and freight service. Several regional fields offer local access, while two major international airports provide travel to and from world markets. Just one hour to the east, for example, is Pittsburgh International Airport, the third-largest in the U.S. And two hours to the west, is Port Columbus International Airport, with more than 20 commercial and commuter airlines.

More than Planes and Trains

It takes more than good transportation to attract and retain companies. And once again, Belmont County delivers.

For one thing, there are good people available — not just in the county itself, where unemployment is typically in the 5 percent range, but in nearby

counties, too. Belmont County's great highway system makes commuting easy, too!

The county also offers abundant electric power and natural gas — both of them competitively priced, well below the national average. Water for residential and industrial use is also abundant.

Companies, and their people, need access to education, too. In Belmont County, there's two-year Belmont Technical College, offering career programs for students and customized education and training programs for employers. There's also Ohio University's Eastern Campus, a four-year school. O.U. is ranked high in the nation for academic quality — and it has earned a "Best Buy" rating for a quality, affordable education from *U.S. News & World Report*.

Nearby communities such as Wheeling, Steubenville, and Zanesville offer additional opportunities for higher education. And the large Pittsburgh metropolitan center, with its many colleges and universities, is little more than an hour away.

Belmont County also has seven school districts providing elementary and secondary education. Voters in three districts recently approved construction of new school facilities.

Belmont County offers a full range of medical and health care options, with a number of hospitals, clinics, and medical centers located in county communities. For highly specialized care, there are major medical centers in Pittsburgh, Columbus, and Cleveland — all less than two hours away.

There's a broad range of available housing throughout the county, too. It comes in every price range, from low-cost apartments and starter homes to executive housing. Three major new housing developments are currently in the works.

A Great 'Quality of Life'

For many, an added strength of the county — and the entire region — is its Quality of Life.

But, in many respects, Belmont County offers a unique blend of small town living and big city amenities. Sure, life is a bit less frantic, the crime rate is almost non-existent, and the neighborhoods really do have neighbors you get to know.

There's a broad range of recreational opportunities, including hiking, hunting, boating, and fishing. Belmont County is also home to the famous "Jamboree in the Hills," an annual event considered "The Superbowl" of country music festivals. Of course, Saturday nights in nearby downtown Wheeling mean the famous Jamboree USA, which the Capital Music Hall has



County seat St. Clairsville recently completed a major downtown revitalization project.

hosted since 1933. On a more serious "note," the Hall is also home to the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra.

There's also the famous Oglebay Park in Wheeling, with its lodge, restaurants, zoo, three golf courses, swimming and hiking, and other activities.

For sports, there's local college and high school basketball and football, along with the East Coast Hockey League's Wheeling Thunderbirds. For major league enjoyment, drive a few hours and there are the

A Winning Combination

Belmont County and its communities have a lot to offer to employers and employees, but those natural advantages are magnified by two important plusses: Ohio and Appalachia. Because the State of Ohio, already a leader in economic development, has developed a special set of incentives available to employers locating or expanding in the state's river crescent.

Ohio's incentives are internationally recognized for their effectiveness. In fact, during the 1990s, more U.S. companies—over 6,000—selected Ohio for investments in new facilities and expansions than any other state. More global companies have made Ohio their second home than any other state, too. Over 1,200 non-U.S.-owned companies have decided to invest in Ohio.

The state's incentive philosophy is built on several cornerstones:

- *Provide meaningful incentives that help companies grow — incentives such as tax credits that reward investment and job creation, training assistance, and other programs.*
- *Offer those programs to new and existing employers, to help companies that already operate in the state build their future in Ohio.*

The success of those development policies is obvious: 44 other states have adopted economic development programs that mirror Ohio's! Capitalizing on their benefits is one of the cornerstones of the Governor's Opportunity Agenda.

But employers choosing Belmont County for projects enjoy additional benefits, thanks to the state's commitment to encourage development in its Appalachian region.

For example, the Governor's Office of Appalachia funds economic development, training, travel and tourism, and other initiatives.

To learn more about the State of Ohio's economic development efforts, contact the Ohio Department of Development at 1-800-345-OHIO.