

Ohio River — navigable year-round and one of the nation's largest commercial waterways — provides a transportation option for manufacturers that require low-cost shipping of everything from chemical feedstocks to finished products.

There are river terminals in several major Washington County communities, including Belpre and Marietta.

The Ohio River network not only provides access to markets from Pittsburgh to St. Louis but, thanks to the connecting Mississippi River and the Port of New Orleans, it's a pathway to the world.

The county offers excellent highway access, too. There's I-77, one of the nation's major north-south Interstates, connecting the Akron-Cleveland industrial complex to the north with the Carolinas to the south. Head north on I-77 for 45 minutes and you connect with I-70, an east-west Interstate offering direct access from the East Coast to the Rocky Mountains. Currently under development is a connector to West Virginia's upgraded Route 50, which will provide additional access options to the East Coast.

Capitalizing on this strong highway access, a number of major motor freight carriers serve the region. The county offers rail service, both to river communities

and inland industrial/commercial areas such as Beverly. In Newport, there's an intermodal rail-barge facility.

Another plus is the community's access to air transportation. Just five miles from Marietta is the Wood County Airport, providing air freight and regular commercial service, with connections to nearby hubs.

People To Grow, Too

With an unemployment rate averaging approximately six percent, Washington County can provide companies with a pool of experienced, skilled workers to help them grow. The county's location, near primarily rural communities with even higher unemployment rates, is an additional plus for attracting employees.

Economic development officials credit the community's strong educational institutions with helping provide employers with the kind of people who can help their companies grow and profit. There are effective vocational education programs in the local high schools, including several that permit students to earn community college credits. Community college and career center programs not only serve individual students, but increasingly, are developed cooperatively with local employers to meet specific skills needs.



Thermoquest's Forma Scientific Division has found Washington County's available and skilled work force to be an asset to their business.

Of course, Washington County is also home to nationally known Marietta College, noted for its technical sciences offerings (including one of the country's finest polymer engineering programs) and its Center for Leadership and Business.

Just ten miles away, across the river, is West Virginia University, and Ohio University in Athens is just 35 miles to the west.

Washington County has also been aggressively adding to the work force, using innovative "welfare-to-work" programs that couple effective life skills and technical training with mentoring and support efforts.

Looking Beyond

The county's great location and transportation access have led to strong economic development in the vicinity of Marietta, its largest city. There, commercial properties are still available in the city's growing retail and business districts.

Recently, however, relocating and expanding companies have begun discovering other areas of the community poised for growth, with sites and infrastructure available for industrial development.

These include river communities such as Belpre, New Matamoras, Newport, and Porterfield, as well as inland communities such as Beverly.

Washington County also has an Enterprise Zone program, which can provide tax incentives to employers. Another important "incentive" is the county's reputation for moving quickly on needed infrastructure improvements to help companies relocate or grow in the community.



The Ohio River carries more cargo than the Panama Canal—over 250 million tons.

A Winning Combination

Washington 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 Washington 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.