



Where Grit
Meets Growth

Season's Greetings!

Although 2025 still has some life left in it, we're calling it a "win" and getting ready to plunge into 2026 with a brand new image (but the same old attitude!)

The name "Youngstown Business Incubator" faded to black this year, as we rebranded to simply "YBI." This was an important moment for us, as we finally acknowledged that we are no longer just an incubator. We have four core programs, and the word "incubator" only applies to one of them.

We've also never just served the City of Youngstown; we're a regional economic development organization, and our name should reflect that.

With that said, we have both a proud history and a bright future in the City, and we want to hold onto that legacy in some way. As part of our rebranding, our new tagline is "Where Grit Meets Growth", which I think sums us up pretty nicely.

To be sure, 2025 has been a year of growth.

- The February announcement of the **Youngstown Innovation Hub for Aerospace and Defense** will create **650 jobs** in the community at both existing manufacturers and startups.
- Holding our **inaugural Advanced Manufacturing User eXpo (AMUX)** at the Eastwood Event Centre, highlighting YBI's work and our clients' products to 200 local leaders.
- Creating a partnership with **BRITE Energy Innovators** in Warren to manage their building and offer programs that support manufacturing and entrepreneurship in Trumbull County.
- Working to attract **new startups** to the region, including **LeapFast**, an advanced welding technology, and **Astral8**, a safety services software company.
- Announcing the honorees for our **inaugural EmpowerUS event**, recognizing **women and minority leaders in our community**. The event will recognize Ryan Gilchrist (Ryan's Chair), Angelica Diaz (OCCHA), Rhonda Bowser (BCI Granite), Jeff Green (Jazz in the Park), and Jasmine Neal (Healing Hearts CPR) on February 26, 2026, at Stambaugh Auditorium.
- **Finishing renovations to YBI Main**, making it a showcase to be proud of instead of a temple of darkness.
- YBI's **Explore VR program** worked with **more than 2,400 students** from Ashtabula, Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana Counties for STEM career exploration and curriculum enrichment.
- Starting design work on the **Innovation Hub facility, a 110,000-sf facility** that will allow us to bring new companies and grow existing manufacturers in the region.
- Awarding over **\$650,000 in federal funding to small to medium manufacturers** to support the adoption of advanced technologies, helping to "de-risk" the projects with both financial and technical assistance.
- Secured a **\$35,000 grant** from the **Ohio Department of Natural Resources** for our **Explore VR program** to develop **360° virtual reality videos** showcasing environmental science careers.
- Entering into an agreement with our **Israeli partners, XJet**, the additive manufacturing equipment manufacturer, to be their commercial partner in the US. (We also acquired their metal system to go with our ceramic printer).
- Speaking of, we entered into an agreement with **Nivalon Medical** to produce custom made **spinal implants** on the XJet ceramic printer using a material that YBI helped to develop.
- **Our MBAC team was recognized as the top performer in the state** (despite having the smallest budget and the smallest population base), helping clients secure \$448,923 in contracts, create 89 jobs, retain 63 jobs and infuse \$171,000 in capital into client companies.

But enough about us.

What have our clients done? Because that's what really matters.

Some of the highlights include:

- **Juggerbot 3D** produced solid rocket fuel for Firehawk Aerospace for a project with the US Army.
- **Leucite**, an AI platform for materials manufacturers, secured two paid pilots with a crystal manufacturer and ceramics manufacturer.
- **Nivalon Medical**, a YBI Shark Tank finalist developing custom 3D-printed spinal implants, has received approval from India's Ministry of Health to begin clinical trials in 2026.
- **Uncle Crunch**, the freeze-dried candy company, was placed in 200 retail locations throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois, with 96 of those locations launching in Q4.
- **Annissa Neider** utilized her Women Business Enterprise (WBE) certification to bring in over \$77k in contract work through her architecture firm, A. Neider Architecture.
- **Completed 360° virtual reality videos** for Humtown Products, Hynes Industries, Ultium Cells, #1 Cochran, and Novelis to promote manufacturing careers.
- **Gloris Griffin**, owner of Gloris Griffin Counseling Services, opened her second location in the City of Warren, expanding from her Boardman location.
- **Ursa Major**, the hypersonic engine company, closed a \$100M Series E round of investment, positioning the company to play a critical role in the missile supply chain.
- **The Art Cafe** continues to expand its business through land purchase, utilizing both their state certification and a state loan program.
- **Astral8**, a Slovenian-based company, launched into the US market, leasing space at YBI, securing a pilot project with the Austintown Fire Department, and raising a \$1M+ investment from South Central Ventures.
- **Dinesol Plastics, Humtown Additive, Juggerbot 3D, LeapFast Manufacturing, and REM Electronics** all took advantage of YBI's expertise in Digital Engineering Software, ramping up their own manufacturing capabilities.

Every one of these wins is another step towards the vibrant, diverse community that we all want to live and work in. Your support is critical to making it happen. Whether it's by allowing us to film a 360-degree virtual reality video with you, attending YBI Shark Tank, or making an introduction for our companies, we couldn't do any of this work without you. We're grateful to everyone who pitches in to support our mission.

However, there is still much work to be done. As you think about your year-end contributions, I hope that you'll consider making a gift to help support YBI's efforts. These dollars are the seed that allows us to match state and federal grants, build new programs and operate our facilities.

If you would like to learn more about specific programs and outcomes, or to support a particular initiative, please reach out to me to see how we can align with your goals. I promise we will work to not only meet your expectations, but to exceed them in every way possible.

As always, thank you for helping make the Mahoning Valley a better place. And from all of us, best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season.

Warm regards,

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