

## 'Advance Akron' launched

# Chamber cites success, introduces campaign

By Marilyn Miller - Akron Beacon Journal

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The Greater Akron Chamber's 2008 meeting started out Wednesday evening with rhythm and voice before a crowd of about 800.

The University of Akron's marching band led chamber leaders to the podium at the John S. Knight Center, the Akron police and fire department's color guard presented flags and local recording artist Rachel Roberts sang the national anthem.

The theme of the 101st meeting was *Advance Akron. Our Region. Our Future*. It is also the theme of the next phase of a marketing campaign that Akron's leaders are working on.

Dan Colantone, president and chief executive, said the chamber is the largest organization representing the voice of business in the region.

"President John F. Kennedy once said, 'Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.'"

Colantone said 2007 was a terrific year for the region, with several major announcements.

- Marketing services company InfoCision committed to a \$21 million expansion of its headquarters, resulting in the potential of 700 additional jobs.
- FirstEnergy, the fifth-largest investor-owned utility in the nation, announced plans for a \$30 million high performance "green" building, demonstrating a long-term commitment to the area.
- Sterling Jewelers, the largest specialty retail jeweler in the country with more than 1,300 stores in all 50 states, committed to a 30-year plan to keep its headquarters in Akron.
- Goodyear agreed to a new world and North American headquarters in Akron, keeping about 2,900 employees here.

"Today, one of our greatest opportunities is in the development of emerging business, growing midmarket privately held companies such as GOJO and InfoCision, which grew from ideas that were nurtured by innovative entrepreneurs and flourished in Akron's favorable business climate," Colantone said.

He mentioned the development of Akron's global business accelerator, an incubator that houses 35 companies with 155 employees. He also noted the growth of biomedical companies in the area.

The incoming chamber chairman is Tom Strauss, Summa Health System's president and chief executive.

In 2007, Tom Tulodzieski, president of KeyBank, served in the position.

Tulodzieski said that over the past two years, he worked with a group of area leaders who were "innovative and progressive."

He credited the chamber's leadership for not waiting until the five-year plan created in 2003 was complete, but instead attempting to seize economic development momentum with the new Advance Akron campaign.

"We have had a tremendous impact on generating wealth in our region — in 2007, 25 companies were assisted with their location and expansion investments totaling \$135 million, creating and retaining 5,000 jobs," he said.

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## Comments

### **Enquiring Minds**

*Akron, OH*    **Reply »**

#1

*1 hr ago*

So where is the 'peoples' website, or is this just so much Inside Glad-handing again?

### **Rob**

*Ashtabula, OH*    **Reply »**

#2

*13 min ago*

it's too bad that most of the wages at infocision are minimum wage. what we need are manufacturing jobs. And also get rid of the unions. They bleed the companies dry with their strikes, not allowing for expansion.

**gone from ohio**

*Mulberry, FL* **Reply »**

#3

*12 min ago*

You forgot the other achievements: job losses, companies moving jobs to china, foreclosures, and oh yah, "my preacher told me i gotta vote republican 'cause they's agin' abortion and same sex unions" !!!!

Give it up, hoio's not comming back until the people vote for some progressive candidates and replace the current legislature with people who will make BOLD steps to get ohio working again !!!  
Bring back Dick Celeste .

**Dan**

*Urbana, IL* **Reply »**

#4

*21 hrs ago*

There is ONE reason Ohio (and many other states) are suffering. Ohio's economy was completely dominated by dying industries.

It is an enormous challenge to refocus the economy of an entire state. It would have been easier if we had started sooner. But I applaud the outstanding leadership across the state, including those mentioned in this article.

They are turning things around. Ohio will endure more years of pain before things get noticably better, but the healing has begun.

**Tom**

*Milwaukee, WI* **Reply »**

#5

*19 hrs ago*

â€ FirstEnergy, the fifth-largest investor-owned utility in the nation, announced plans for a \$30 million high performance "green" building, demonstrating a long-term commitment to the area. They should put their money into improving their reactor-vessel-lids. First Energy came within weeks of a rupture and a likely meltdown at Davis Besse

**Ma Kettle**

Akron, OH **Reply »**

#6

17 hrs ago

YOU CANNOT LAUNCH a space ship without people in it and personnel on the ground capable of keeping it on course.

Not everyone can be in the bank line depositing their "extra" pay for making this happen.

WHAT A WASTE OF TIME AND EFFORT!

Remember this on Election Day everyone!

**ZZ-ZZ**

Akron, OH **Reply »**

#7

13 hrs ago

I bet they luv yo in Fla.

**gone from ohio wrote:**

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