

## **St. Clairsville Chamber of Commerce Member Showcase features Belmont County CIC/DOD, January 2011**

The Belmont County Community Improvement Corporation's Department of Development (CIC / DOD) is a private, non-profit 501(c)4 corporation dedicated to economic development in Belmont County. Executive Director Sue Douglass explains that the organization's mission is to attract, retain, and expand businesses in the local area and that they do so, in part, by facilitating access to business resources. As a prime point of contact for business development, they can provide access to a wide network of professional resources, both private and public, including local, state, and federal resources.

Examples of the types of resources the Community Improvement Corporation can connect your business with are the Muskingum County Business Incubator (MCBI), Ohio Mid-Eastern Government Association (OMEGA) and Eastern Ohio Development Alliance (EODA). CIC/DOD is one of the hubs of MCBI, a 9-county consortium for business development, and the organization also holds seats on the OMEGA and EODA boards. A recent addition to the office's services is a public service partnership with *The Times Leader* to publish a *Resource Review* once a month to highlight seminars provided by CIC / DOD partners. This listing, appearing in the business section on the first Sunday of each month, will inform business leaders of upcoming seminars and other informational meetings focusing on business-related topics.

In addition to providing access to information and business contacts, the organization is defined by the state of Ohio to do for local government what they, by statute, are excluded from doing in business. The Belmont County Community Improvement Corporation holds three contracts with Belmont County: to

administer the revolving loan fund, to act as the land agent for Fox Commerce Park (Belmont County's only business-ready park, a 125-acre tract that is home to 10 businesses), and for general economic development for the county. The organization can also act on behalf of any city or village with assistance for business transactions, most commonly buying and selling property. While discussing what CIC / DOD can do to help your business, it is also helpful to outline activities that are outside their scope of business. While they can help review and evaluate potential business sites, they are not a realtor; and while they can help with loan and grant information, they do not endorse any particular financial institution. The CIC / DOD does not implement any business solutions or businesses, but instead is a resource for people in business. Their main function, in layman's terms, is to help keep Belmont County businesses happy and healthy.

In summary, Director Douglass says her work focuses on two main areas of support. First is to help businesses realize that they are not going through starting, expanding, or sustaining growth alone. Second is that her office can help with access to resources to get the most out of your business planning and to make your business development dollars count more.

For more information, you can contact Sue Douglass at 740 695-9678, visit the office at 117 East Main Street on Historic National Road, or review the website at [www.belmontcic.com](http://www.belmontcic.com)