

Business Outlook

A special section to the Buffalo Reflex
Wednesday, February 23, 2022



GRO Buffalo plans and goals for 2022

GRO Buffalo is an initiative. Most people recognize GRO Buffalo as being associated with the beautification efforts from Helping Hands. However, GRO Buffalo is much more than that. The entire community works together to promote economic development. Those efforts come from city and county governments, schools, organizations, and the business community. Therefore, GRO Buffalo is not one thing but layers of many things to bring Buffalo's flourishing quality of life.

What are current plans going on in the initiative?

1. The fourth class of Leadership Buffalo was launched and is in process. Alumni of Leadership Buffalo are plugging into organizations and volunteer efforts all over the county. The program helps nurture members in the community to take on leadership roles. This program works with a multi-generational group of citizens. It provides them with an immersive experience to learn about their community, the city hall, the schools, non-profits, and the local and state government. The project has helped inspire a wide range of leaders, having completed three classes and graduated 39 students.

This spring, please read about the leadership class in Joy Beamer's weekly column in the Buffalo Reflex as she walks through the course weekly and shares the outcomes.

2. The key to community prosperity is strong local leadership. Often the same set of individuals serves in a variety of leadership roles and, as a result, experience burnout. Additionally, local citizens who could be potential leaders lack the knowledge on how to engage. This year GRO Buffalo wants to engage and recruit leaders to work alongside current leadership to teach and mentor.

3. The community engagement committee will try to keep local citizens informed. Sometimes lack the knowledge on the direction where their community is headed or lack of understanding causes dis-engagement and, at worst, mistrust. GRO Buffalo leaders will proactively share details about community strategies, local development priorities and progress.

4. GRO Buffalo will continue to produce a monthly newsletter promoting GRO Buffalo and featuring a theme for a quality community (i.e., February is Kindness), highlighting volunteers, updating com-

munity projects, dates for Helping Hands and other projects.

5. Kailyn Smith, the Buffalo High School intern, will update and promote GRO Buffalo initiatives on social media and increase her media role.

6. Core leadership has been assigned to different committees to address the community's needs and report back to keep everyone in leadership updated effectively, not wasting valuable time. Better meetings and better outcomes are the goals.

7. Leaders will attend cross-community Zoom meetings with other GRO cities to learn and share what is working and what doesn't work to help GRO at each location.

8. The city of Buffalo is a partner with GRO Buffalo. This year the city will hold the first Buffalo Easter Egg Hunt on Easter weekend and partnered with GRO Buffalo volunteers. More volunteers are needed for this project.

9. The city of Buffalo will apply for multiple grants to continue community improvements. Rural communities are resource-constrained. GRO leaders will meet the challenges by pursuing state and federal grants helping local government to get the dollars available for worthwhile progress like airport development and money for parks and recreation.

10. Helping Hands is alive and well, with many willing volunteers and organizations having nine events in 2021; 29 in the last three years. A clean, vibrant, and well-maintained community inspires local citizens and is welcoming to visitors. Buffalo is becoming an attractive community for economic development. This GRO Buffalo volunteer lead project conducts monthly clean-up events across the community.

11. The city of Buffalo is in council discussion about establishing and enforcing city codes to help the community bet-



Helping Hands volunteers have contributed many hours toward beautifying Buffalo. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ter maintain its esthetics. GRO Buffalo team will work closely with the City of Buffalo to embark on this effort.

12. GRO Buffalo will connect to local businesses to help integrate alumni talent with local internships, encourage businesses to use the GRO Nucleus jobs platform and share local successful BHS alumni stories.

13. GRO Buffalo will explore opportunities for businesses and industries to be involved with the Dallas County Technical Center. Hollie Elliott, from economic development, recently said that GRO would continue working with the school, engage more with the business communi-

ty, and integrate into the community for businesses to form better and longer-lasting relationships with the Dallas County Technical Center.

14. GRO Buffalo will join other GRO communities in discussing rural health and the challenges in the different communities. Learning the obstacles will allow the groups to start making future goals to assist the neighborhood in finding solutions.

15. Business 911 Speaker Series is changing to shorter videos highlighting business owners and the GRO communities. The GRO Buffalo community will be featured on March 25, June 3, August 12, October 21 and

December 30. Details will be posted on the Facebook page, GRO and chamber newsletters and the Buffalo Reflex.

16. Very few buildings are left downtown to use, but economic development is still working with business owners to develop projects and promote additional new business to Buffalo.

At a recent committee meeting, a community member said, "No one wants to talk about the great things that are happening in Buffalo, because tooting your own horn is not part of the local culture. Buffalo is doing great things for the good of the community. So, let's start talking about it!"

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In 2021 GRO Buffalo achieved primary goals

By Joy Beamer
GRO Buffalo,
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The core GRO Buffalo leadership sets goals each year. In 2021, the team announced significant accomplishments through the goals set by the core leadership.

Goals included the following:

1. Implement a communication and outreach plan.
2. Conduct an industry site day to attract business.
3. Launch an entrepreneurship campaign.
4. Graduate class 3 and recruit class 4 of Leadership Buffalo.
5. Complete Phase 1 of airport renovation and begin on Phase 2.
6. Conduct 9 Helping Hands cleanup events.
7. Obtain better broadband connectivity data.
8. Create a strong internal support network.

HOW DID GRO BUFFALO REACH THEIR 2021 GOALS

Goal 1: Leadership sent the same messages to the public in a coordinated outreach program. Outreach developed a monthly electronic newsletter with a monthly theme. For instance, going into January, GRO Buffalo promoted volunteerism/giving back and kindness in February. To sign up for the electronic newsletter, email your address to grobuffalo@gmail.com.



In March, the MFA Oil Foundation awarded the city of Buffalo a cash grant of \$2,000 to support airport infrastructure improvement. Pictured are, from left: Bill Monday, O'Bannon Bank, Dallas County Community Foundation and Buffalo Rotary; Bob Hostetler represents the business aviation community; Barry Melton, MFA Oil; John Crawford, MFA Oil board member, Economic Development, GRO Buffalo; Brandon Kenall, Buffalo mayor; and Hollie Elliott, Dallas County Economic Development, GRO Buffalo, Buffalo Rotary and Dallas County Community Foundation. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GRO Buffalo recruited Kailyn Smith, Buffalo High School and graduate of Leadership Buffalo, to train as an intern to manage social media.

Missouri Life magazine did a web feature on Buffalo focusing on the Old Home Place concert series at Maple and Main. To read the article, go to <https://missourilife.com/>

maple-main-music-for-buffalos-boom/.

Goal 2: A group of people was invited to see several properties and suggest best practices to market to investors. The event included local leaders, realtors and statewide partners.

Goal 3: Virtual business speaker events occur once a month with 100s of views of Facebook each month. The purpose is to train and encourage local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Goal 4: Leadership Buffalo aced the goal of graduation and recruitment while building new relationships, meeting local government officials and traveling to Jefferson City to connect with state government opportunities.

Goal 5: The Buffalo airport renovation now has a

Buffalo Community Vision

GRO Buffalo provides the umbrella under which community leaders and members can come together and provide intentional, strategic direction, resources and implementation for key community priorities.

flight instructor with a student pipeline and increased airplane traffic, in part because the airport facility is open for rest and relief at the AOPA. The airport also has an AMP mechanic.

The city of Buffalo appointed Jeff Lilley as airport manager.

Goal 6: Helping Hands continues to schedule new events for 2022 after meeting its goal for 2021. The community is taking notice and a new sense of ownership is emerging. Neighborhoods are cleaning up and neighbors take note and catch the excitement.

In 2021, more groups pitched in the Helping Hands cleanup, such as the Buffalo FFA chapter. They built a fence at the airport. The old city cemetery was picked-up by various volunteers, business leaders, and churches on another day.

Goal 7: In the spring of 2021, economic develop-

ment started a monthly meeting after learning that money for underserved communities without broadband was coming down the pike. The money trickles down from the federal government to state authorities to disperse. Many partners gathered to discuss broadband money and how the money would best improve broadband in the region.

Goal 8: Hollie Elliott, director of economic development, continued to coordinate with leaders, strengthening relationships and building new ones. She was also appointed to a statewide committee making more connections in Jefferson City. In addition, Elliott continually builds relationships with organizations beyond Dallas County borders.

GRO Buffalo partners with city, county, school, Dallas County Economic

Development, Dallas County Community Foundation, area banks, businesses, and local leaders to improve residents' quality of life.

Relationships with Women's Business Center, StartHere, eFactory, Small Business Development Center, SuperCharge SW and Southwest Council of Governments Revolving Loan Fund are strong. As a result, entrepreneurs have many options to help plan their business dream.

City leaders made several enhancements at the pool, parks, and skatepark to partner with the GRO program goals. In addition, the sidewalk project on State Hwy. 32 began that will improve the lives of walkers and wheelchair citizens to connect with retail businesses.

The city also made plans to apply in 2022 for federal money that is becoming available. Last year, the fire department brought home a new firetruck thanks to grants. In addition, the new police chief was awarded several grants to take care of the safety of the officers and public, including prescription drug box disposal.

Buffalo has been arranging the infrastructure needed to build the Durham Company to open in late 2022. The manufacturer plans on hiring 50 people to start.

Economic development established a nonprofit GRO Buffalo fund with the Dallas County Community Foundation and managed by Community Foundation of the Ozarks to support the efforts and incidentals listed above. Anyone may donate by connecting to <https://www.cfozarks.org/fund/gro-buffalo-fund>.

GRO Buffalo's core leadership invites anyone interested in getting involved in making a better Buffalo, contact them at GROBuffalo@gmail.com.

The recent GRO survey provides this quote:

"I have come to understand that having effective community leaders that are also community partners with the best interest of the group is a unique and precious asset among communities."

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I'll be back tomorrow....

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Citizens comment about concerns for Buffalo



In the GRO Buffalo study, citizens answer the question, “What does the community and economic development need to focus on?” Below is a summary of those comments.

New Industry and Business

The consensus in responses reveals that more jobs and bigger businesses are needed for the county. Factory jobs in manufacturing would provide a source of income for more people and possibly help lower-income residents improve their quality of life.

Local manufacturing employee populations would be spending money in Buffalo for housing and expenses, which helps the local economy. The Durham project is a wonderful start, a survey wrote, hoping it will entice other companies to establish here. Many feel larger companies hiring more employees will bring the community to life.

Several citizens suggested tax incentives or breaks and job grants be offered to potential manufacturers. One respondent indicated that small businesses employing five people each won't make a huge change in our economy.

Residents want to see the vacant buildings filled with new businesses.

The city of Buffalo will work with any manufacturing company with incentives to settle here, according to Mayor Brandon Kenall.

Hollie Elliott, economic development, has contacts with SBA and other agencies that assist companies in establishing new locations. Her office is in the City Municipal Building on the square in Buffalo.

Regarding the impact of small business, Chron. reports, “Small businesses are important because they provide opportunities for entrepreneurs and create meaningful jobs with greater job satisfaction than positions with larger, traditional companies.”

Local Business

Consumers want bigger businesses like Walmart and Woods to address the needs of residents. Shoppers would avoid traveling to Bolivar or Springfield to get necessities. Locals want to shop local when they can.

Many respondents want to see local businesses expand and build their businesses. Therefore, entrepreneurship is encouraged and will be supported.

Collective retailers who band together to sell their wares sharing expenses bring

more local products to Buffalo. Shoppers enjoy these ventures' variety and cooperative spirit and would like to see more retail collectives.

The survey also presented the need to support existing local business growth and stability.

Each month the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce participates in business education series, Business 911. The live presentations are presented over Facebook Live and watched on the chamber's Facebook page.

Economic development can connect local businesses with free education and guidance from different resources. Contact Hollie Elliott, director, at 417-345-2701.

Law Enforcement

A top priority for many is the continued drug problem in the area. The challenge comes to law enforcement tackling the increasing number of people who use drugs, which often spills over into additional crime.

Vandalism has been rising and requests to reduce or eliminate destruction are on the residents' hearts.

These issues have ongoing investigations and law enforcement in the city and county welcome citizen help reporting crimes, drug use and vandalism. During an active crime, call 911. To report a problem in the city, call 417-345-2709 and in the county, call 417-345-2441.

Broadband

The entire county wants reliable broadband because the community would have more opportunities for schooling, remote jobs, businesses from home and general communication if affordable broadband was available.

Infrastructure

Truman Road and US Hwy. 65 continues to be a traffic risk. Many citizens want to see a solution at the intersection and others want to see a US 65 Hwy. bi-pass to relieve some traffic in town from the increasing traffic.

Both Dallas county commissioners and Buffalo alderman are asked to work on roads and infrastructure to attract and keep businesses and homeowners.

In the county, commissioners need to address the problem of large trucks traveling on residential roads to pick up eggs and milk from the rural communities, causing

rutting, potholes, and lousy patch repairs. A suggestion for restricted truck use may be in order.

County and city elected officials continually work on road problems and solutions. Specific issues need to be reported to the commissioners at 417-345-2632 or to the city of Buffalo at 417-345-2701.

Housing

Simple fact: Everyone agrees there is a definite need for housing for low to mid-range incomes. Developers and house flippers have an opportunity for growth.

Teen Focus

For decades, parents have wanted something for students to do when they are not in school or extracurricular activities. Suggestions from the surveys included opening more places like Axtreme, Buffalo Bowl and the YMCA. In addition, they suggested a local outreach center or activities like a movie theater or a roller rink and better parks. For example, one survey suggests improving the skatepark.

Mayor Kenall reports that the Buffalo Skateboard Club will be helping to decide what enhancements to make at the skatepark this year. In addition, he reminds everyone of the walking trails, parks and frisbee golf available within the city.

Community Cleanup

While residents gave credit to the Helping Hands volunteers, many surveys asked for more clean-up around town. Specifically, requests to clean up old buildings on the square and others along business US Hwy. 65.

Many respondents complained about several residences which need sprucing up and cleaned up. In addition, citizens suggested that the city enforce ordinances for lawn care, items littering properties and streets and develop regulations for rental properties.

When a property in Buffalo becomes overgrown or has excessive trash or discarded items on the property, citizens should report the problem at city hall for investigation. City Hall is on the west side of the Buffalo square at 115 S Maple St. City Hall can also coordinate with Helping Hands for clean-up projects.

Social Services

A heart for families in need, mental

health and disabled Buffalo residents expressed a need to focus on the families who are in need. Many believe that some are not getting the assistance they need to maintain an essential quality of life.

According to the survey responses, mental health counseling and rehabilitation for the disabled are not always easily accessed.

From OACAC (Neighborhood Center), Kathy Banks has many programs to help the underserved. Call for an appointment at 417-345-7964. In addition, there is a food pantry, The People's Pantry, located on the porch of the office at 413 S. Maple in Buffalo.

School

The survey brought a concern for D.A. Mallory Elementary's facility health to leaders' attention. Residents expressed concerns about fixing it before the building runs down and starts falling apart.

An entrepreneurship program for the high school or a class for entrepreneurship would help students have a better start for building a business when they get out of school.

Dallas County R-1 Schools recently implemented the next five-year plan, including improvements for the elementary building. In addition, the school promotes internships at local businesses for high school students.

Tourism

Throughout sections of the survey, tourism is mentioned. For example, when people go to Bennett Spring or Pomme de Terre, they travel through Buffalo to buy gas and food. Since Buffalo and Dallas County have more activities and stores each year, one suggestion is to design a guide for visitors to help tourists read about what the area offers them.

Continued Support

GRO Buffalo is more than a handful of people implementing the airport restoration, picking up trash or promoting economic development. GRO Buffalo is everyone working together to make the best quality of life for residents. Every week, organizations meet where the community leaders and businesses regularly visit to discuss the different opportunities in the community.

One respondent wrote, “We need to continue creating and supporting a culture of excellence.”



TOP LEADERS IN DALLAS COUNTY

Below is a list of top leaders in Dallas County as determined by a GRO Buffalo Community Survey in 2021. The names are listed in order by top voting scores.

- Hollie Elliott, Economic Development.
- Mayor Brandon Kenall, City of Buffalo.
- Dr. Tim Ryan, Superintendent Dallas County R-1 Schools.
- Tracy Strickland, Leadership Buffalo, facilitator, Shelter Insurance.
- Commissioner Kevin Sharpe, Dallas County.
- Bill Monday, O'Bannon Bank.
- Joy Beamer, GRO Buffalo Outreach, Buffalo Reflex.
- Senator Sandy Crawford, Missouri State Senator.
- Jeff Strickland, Leadership Buffalo, facilitator, Shelter Insurance.
- Nicole Bryan, Market 116.

- Dr. Keith White, educator.
- Terry Lane, Buffalo alderman, Emergency Management.
- Sue Dyle, Price Family Farms, GRO Buffalo volunteer.
- Debby Dryer, Assistant Superintendent Dallas County R-1 Schools.
- Chad Bryan, Entrepreneur.
- Jonathan Barker, Dallas County Prosecuting Attorney.
- Tanya Watson, Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Clara Boggs, Helping Hands Coordinator, OakStar Bank.
- Carmen Smith, BHS coach and educator.
- Chad Garner, law enforcement and Iron Knights.
- Steve Johnson, Buffalo Reflex, editor.
- Mark Elliott, Calvary Chapel, pastor.
- Scott Rice, Dallas County Sheriff.

The Buffalo area business wish list is extensive

Compiled by GRO Buffalo Outreach

In the GRO Buffalo survey, respondents described businesses they would like to see in the community. As a result, entrepreneurs could gauge the community's pulse when deciding what company to introduce here.

The economic development office has many resources for start-up cash, business training, retail space availability and other resources to make a business idea come to life. Contact Hollie Elliott, executive director, for a consultation and referrals at 417-319-4880 or email dal-lascountyed@gmail.com.

Businesses or types of business Dallas County citizens want are listed here.

RESTAURANTS

- Taco Bell (No. 1 request).
- Starbucks.
- Sit-down restaurants.
- Popeyes.
- Wendy's.
- Downtown ice-cream specialty shop.
- Chick-fil-A.
- Tea room.
- Bakery.
- National food chains.

RETAIL

- Aldi.
- New car dealership.
- Target.
- Shoe store.
- Hobby store.
- Clothing retail store.
- Bookstore.
- Walgreens.
- A truck stop/travel center.
- Walmart Supercenter.
- More retail.

RECREATIONAL

- Indoor play facility.
- Indoor courts.
- Batting cages.
- Mini golf.
- Go-carts.
- Driving range.
- Entertainment opportunities.
- Roller skating rink.
- Movie theater.
- Sports complex.

SERVICES

- Taxi service.
- Transportation services.
- Arvest Bank.
- Pediatric doctors office.
- Medical marijuana dispensary.
- Additional hotel.



23 Reasons to Believe in Buffalo

Below are citizen responses from the Voice of the Community Survey to the question, "What do you like about your community?"

1. Bison pride.
2. Great people: friendly, hospitable, down-to-earth, caring, service, kind, loving, compassionate and character.
3. Buffalo keeps trying to get better and encourages people to get involved in different ways. Buffalo has heart.
4. Low cost of living.
5. The community invests back, to help it continue to be successful.
6. Small hometown feel — the sense of community.
7. Parks and walking paths.
8. Churches.
9. People pull together in times of need.
10. Friends and neighbors come together to work for the betterment of our community.
11. The synergy of organizations working toward community goals with energy and growth.
12. Size and education system.
13. The fundraisers are held in the community to help raise money for charities, clubs, etc.
14. Rural life, nature, scenery.
15. Connection to helping others, especially the school.



Growth IN THE RURAL OZARKS

16. Most merchants are friendly and welcome customers to the business.
17. Grateful for new businesses and improvements in the city of Buffalo.
18. Strong agriculture community.
19. Resiliency: the willingness to help others and Believe in Buffalo.
20. The Buffalo community is unique because it has enough local businesses and family sources to accommodate our community, so residents don't have to go to Springfield or nearby cities.
21. History of family ties.
22. The renewal of a sense of pride in the community and increased positive attitude.
23. The community is very united.

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