

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fremont-Sandusky County Ranked 4th Micropolitan in the Nation by *Site Selection Magazine*

Sandusky County, Ohio – March 2, 2026 – Fremont–Sandusky County has been ranked the #4 Micropolitan in the United States by Site Selection magazine, once again putting Sandusky County on the national map as a premier location for business growth and investment. Climbing from their rank of 19th in 2025 to 4th in 2026 reflects the county’s strong performance in attracting and retaining projects that meet Site Selection’s Governor’s Cup criteria for capital investment, job creation and new construction. In 2025 alone, Sandusky County recorded 15 qualifying projects, totaling 1,036 new jobs and \$636 million in new capital investment. Fremont–Sandusky County has consistently ranked among Site Selection’s Top 20 Micropolitans for more than a decade, underscoring its long-term strength as a competitive and business-friendly community.

Site Selection’s Micropolitan rankings evaluate U.S. labor markets anchored by a core city of 10,000 to 50,000 residents and their surrounding, economically integrated counties. The list highlights smaller communities that deliver outsized results in corporate investment and job creation. This year’s #4 ranking for Fremont–Sandusky County is driven by major industrial projects in manufacturing, automotive supply chains and advanced plastics, as well as continued support for small business growth.

“This recognition is a direct reflection of the companies that choose to invest, reinvest and grow in Sandusky County,” said Beth Hannam, Executive Director of the Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation. “Moving from 19th to 4th in just one year does not happen by accident. It’s the result of local, regional, and state partners rowing in the same direction, and businesses who believe in this community.”

Reflecting on what the recognition means for residents and employers, Sandusky County Commissioner Scott Miller said, “Congratulations to Fremont-Sandusky County on being recognized as the #4 micropolitan in the United States. Out of 543 communities nationwide is an outstanding achievement and a direct result of collaboration between many community-oriented people.”

Sandusky County’s success is built on strong fundamentals and a highly collaborative approach to economic development. The county draws from a regional workforce of nearly 500,000 people and offers

immediate access to major transportation networks, including Interstate 80/90, U.S. 20, and robust rail infrastructure. Just as important is the partnership between local communities, the Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation, the Regional Growth Partnership and JobsOhio. Together, these organizations help companies navigate sites, incentives, workforce needs and timelines, making it easy to do business in Sandusky County.

“Our commitment to having a business-friendly approach has given our community a competitive advantage. The high ranking demonstrates exceptional opportunities and competitive advantages for doing business in Sandusky County,” said Fremont Mayor Daniel Sanchez. “Our long-term economic development plan is creating a strong business climate here in Fremont.”

Several large-scale projects helped drive the county’s 2025 results. Whirlpool Corporation, the largest U.S. manufacturing operation in the home appliance industry, chose to reinvest in its Ohio laundry manufacturing facilities in and around Sandusky County to support its next generation of washers and dryers, reinforcing Clyde’s position as a global hub for appliance manufacturing. Autokiniton, a leading Tier 1 automotive supplier, is expanding in Bellevue to increase production capacity, add advanced equipment and strengthen logistics so it can better serve automakers across North America. In Clyde, Revere Plastics Systems is expanding to support breakthrough battery technology in the growing energy storage industry, leveraging the region’s plastics and engineering strengths to serve high-growth, technology-driven markets. Fremont is also seeing new investment and diversification as EPC (Engineered Plastic Components) establishes a major operation to serve both appliance and automotive customers, building on its existing presence in Bellevue. Alongside these corporate investments, small and mid-sized businesses like Trench Drain Systems in Fremont are also expanding, supported by tools such as the JobsOhio Small Business Grant, demonstrating that growth is occurring at every level of the local economy. Autokiniton, a leading Tier 1 automotive supplier, is moving forward with a major expansion at its Bellevue facility. The project includes adding production space, advanced equipment and logistics upgrades that will allow the plant to double its production capacity and better serve automakers across North America. This investment both secures hundreds of existing jobs and deepens the county’s role in the automotive supply chain.

Mayor of the City of Bellevue, Kevin Strecker, says, “With the expansion at Autokiniton, their corporate team continues to see the benefits of manufacturing in the City of Bellevue and Sandusky County. The team of Chase Eikenbary with RGP/JobsOhio, Beth Hannam with SCEDC and Dave Sabo, City of Bellevue, worked with Autokiniton leaders and reassured them their best choice is to continue operations in Ohio and invest here with this expansion. The City of Bellevue appreciates their continued confidence in the city and their work force, in helping make Autokiniton as successful as it has been in Ohio and Sandusky County.”

The Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation plays a critical role in this success. Through its Business Retention & Expansion program, SCEDC regularly meets with local employers to identify opportunities, address challenges early and often turn conversations into major projects. SCEDC also leads targeted business attraction efforts with the Regional Growth Partnership and JobsOhio, while advancing workforce initiatives that connect employers with training, education and talent. Looking ahead, Sandusky County leaders and partners are focused on building on this momentum. With a strong pipeline of sites and buildings, proven logistics advantages and a united network of public and private partners, Sandusky County is well-positioned to attract additional investment and create quality career opportunities for residents.

About SCEDC: The Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to workforce development, business retention and expansion, and business recruitment for Sandusky County. Our mission is to enhance the economic well-being of all residents and businesses within the county.