

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



**LANSDOWNE**  
Economic Development Corporation









# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

During 2023, several major economic development projects that were in the works for years, even decades, reached a pinnacle milestone and moved forward toward completion. Since inception, the LEDC has embraced art promotion as a strategy for achieving economic development.

In 2002, we produced the first annual arts festival in the Lansdowne Central Business District (CBD), which has grown to now feature nearly 100 artists with thousands of patrons attending.

In 2005, the LEDC obtained a \$900,000 grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The funds were used to purchase the shuttered Lansdowne Theater and to establish the Historic Lansdowne Theater Corporation (HLTC), an independent not-for-profit corporation. Funds were also used to renovate the theater retail and second-floor office spaces and place them into service. Subsequently, HLTC raised \$16 million and is in the process of a major theater restoration with plans to re-open in the Fall of 2024. The Lansdowne Theater is expected to attract 100,000 guests annually and will be a very strong catalyst for greater economic development.

Other examples of art-based economic development are the LEDC's Holiday Art Show (A Bit of the Arts), the Farmers Market, Utility Works, (artist studios), MakerSpace, (creative learning center and business incubator), Juneteenth (community music and art event). These activities bring visitors and patrons to Lansdowne and generate commerce.

In 2023, the LEDC embarked on a new effort in partnership with Lansdowne Borough, to create a Borough-wide arts and cultural initiative to produce gallery shows at the 20\*20 House, and to produce and market arts and music events throughout Lansdowne. All of these art-based activities, coupled with the re-opening of the Lansdowne Theater, will make Lansdowne a regional arts destination. Art appreciation allows us to take a break from life's pressures and provides opportunity for thought and reflection. Art and music add to quality of life. We encourage you to attend and support Lansdowne arts programming, and to also invite friends and regional visitors to enjoy our unique and special community.

As a not-for-profit community organization, the LEDC earns revenue from program activities, individual contributions, sponsorships, and grants. Program activities generate 34% of our revenue which is a high percentage, however only 3% of revenue is derived from individual contributions, which is a low percentage. About 7% of revenue comes from corporate sponsorships, which is also a low percentage. Our success comes from a large group of community volunteers who dedicate thousands of hours of their time to help make Lansdowne a better place. Other members of the community provide financial support. Please don't sit on the sidelines. Learn below how the LEDC benefits your community and please investment in your community by making a contribution to the LEDC. Thank you.

**WILLIAM F. BROWN**  
CHAIRMAN







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- Utility Works - Artist Studios & Classes
- Weekly and Fall Farmers Markets
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- A Bit of the Arts Holiday art show & Sale
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## MAKERSPACE & LAUNCHBOX

In 2020, the LEDC and Penn State Brandywine began a collaborative effort to open an affordable creative learning center, combined with cooperative work studios and offices to help individuals develop the skills and business knowledge to launch a creative career. After a year of planning and construction, the Utility Works MakerSpace and Penn State Brandywine LaunchBox opened March 18, 2021 at 18 N. Lansdowne Ave. The facility has state-of-the-art equipment including Mac computers with design, graphic and other art and creative software, 3D printers, engravers, laser cutters, a recording studio, a photography studio, and more. The LEDC staffs the center 5 days a week and assists with equipment training and technical skill building.

Penn State Brandywine conducts free business training classes and seminars to encourage entrepreneurship and new business development. MakerSpace members pay a modest fee, currently \$50 per month, for unlimited use of the equipment. The facility has class and conference rooms, studio work areas, and 7 private offices available for rent.

We thank Delaware County Council, the Foundation for Delaware County, and Penn State Brandywine for their contributions to this community-enhancing initiative. The LEDC also invested extensive reserve capital in the project. Over the last two years, we issued equipment memberships and rented the private offices. We are currently at 25% of membership capacity. Three of our creative members have generated regular business activity, developing products and recurring sales to customers. We consider this strong evidence that the MakerSpace/LaunchBox approach is successful in creating career opportunities and changing lives.



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# MAKERSPACE (CONT'D)

In 2023 we completed the construction of a recording studio and podcast center. We are now in the process of hiring a sound engineer. This facility is available to musicians and podcasters and we are very excited about the career development opportunities this new facility will provide.

We have been patient, over the last few years, but as 2023 came to a close this project reached its pinnacle. We now see real progress in people's lives and career potential. Sometimes investments take longer to mature. In this case, the delay, in part due to the pandemic, provided the additional time needed to craft a better methodology to impact lives and launch careers.



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# LANDSLOWNE ARTS COMMITTEE & CULTURAL INITIATIVE

Early in 2023, the Borough dissolved the Lansdowne Arts Board and asked the LEDC to create a new committee to develop programs to make and promote Lansdowne as a regional arts destination. The Lansdowne Arts Committee, consisting of members from the former Arts Board plus 7 new members having arts-related education and careers, was formed under the LEDC corporate structure. This new committee produced a fiber-arts gallery show in Fall 2023, titled Threads of Remembrance. The show was presented at the 20\*20 House and ran for eight weeks. Over 150 people attended the opening. Musical performances, lectures and other events were presented during the eight-week run and many other visitors attended.

The Arts Committee also produced three other art shows at Utility Works Kiosk Gallery, which we opened in the second quarter 2023. The Committee also prepared a multi-year arts plan stating the Committee's mission, vision, and actions needed for Lansdowne to become "a recognized hub for artistic excellence welcoming visitors and art patrons."

The plan specifies goals and objectives that include:

- expanded regional reach to attract recognized artists and patrons to Lansdowne,
- engaging with area youth and various underserved demographics,
- hosting musical performances and other events to help make Lansdowne an arts destination, and
- provide affordable and complimentary workshops, educational lectures, and art education at gallery spaces, Utility Works and MakerSpace.





# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & RETENTION

The LEDC promotes business recruitment on its website, in newsletters and promotion materials, and through community outreach. As a result of these efforts, members of the LEDC Business Development Committee met with the principals from Callahan Ward in 2018 and worked with them over a multi-year period to acquire 3 properties, plan, and obtain zoning and permit approvals to build 65 market-rate apartment units along E. Baltimore Ave. in the CBD. Construction started December 2023. This is the first market-rate housing construction project in Lansdowne in several decades.

The LEDC actively recruits new businesses to the CBD and works to retain existing businesses. Often the LEDC is the first point of contact when considering locating a business in Lansdowne. The LEDC website lists properties available for sale or rent and the LEDC maintains a file of parties interested in locating in Lansdowne. Prospective new businesses are provided with a Welcome Packet containing information detailing procedures to open a business, zoning and HARB applications, signage regulations, litter remediation, etc., plus LEDC services, events and business support.



Vacancies in the CBD remain very low as the mix of businesses continues to evolve with a greater emphasis on entertainment, art, food and other services. While many of the new businesses in the CBD are family owned, in 2023, Auto Zone acquired the former Rite Aid building on E. Baltimore Ave., obtained necessary permits and approvals, started renovations and will open a retail store in 2024.

## CBD BUSINESS OWNERS FACEBOOK PLATFORM

The LEDC established and administers a CBD business-owners private Facebook page. This tool provides an easy and effective means of communication among the business community to exchange ideas, learn of educational resources, promotional events, opportunities and challenges. This tool helps to unify the business community and contributes to the success of business retention and recruitment efforts.

Shortly after establishing the members-only Facebook account, the LEDC became the de-facto spokesperson for the CBD. When PECO power failures became a frequent occurrence in the CBD, the LEDC became the lead organization to work with PECO, kept CBD business owners updated, and reached a resolution. At the conclusion, PECO restored power and issued credits to impacted CBD businesses. After the PECO incident, the LEDC became the conduit for the Lansdowne Police Department to alert businesses of street closures and parking restrictions. Because some businesses are not on Facebook, LEDC staff also sends emails and visits business owners personally.

## UTILITY WORKS

Utility Works opened in 2018 in an early 20th-century commercial building originally used by Philadelphia Electric for customer service and employee offices. The building had been vacant for over a decade before the LEDC obtained a \$95,000 grant to renovate the interior spaces. The building owners invested over \$250,000 to renovate the exterior and upgrade mechanical systems. Utility Works has 23 artist studios, a storefront gallery for exhibits and shows, a retail juice bar open to the public, conference rooms and LEDC offices. The studios are rented to working artists, and there is a waiting list for artists looking for space. There is a kiln in the basement and popular ceramic and other art-related classes are taught. The facility generates a good amount of pedestrian activity and is a revenue source to support LEDC operations.



## FARMERS MARKET

The weekly Farmers Market brings hundreds of community members and patrons to Lansdowne every Saturday from Memorial Day to Halloween, and on a monthly basis from Thanksgiving through April. There is a roster of roughly 30 vendors and approximately 20 vendors at each market. Musicians donate their time to perform at each market and each market includes an Artist of the Week. On Community Days, local businesses and community groups have the opportunity to present their products and services. The Farmers Market is not just for shopping, it is a community gathering and social experience.





LANSDOWNE FARMERS MARKET

25+

Vendors every week

50%

Vendors that are Women-  
and/or Minority-Owned

250+

Customers every week



## ARTS ON THE AVENUE

Held on the first Sunday in October every year, this is the largest and most attended event in the Borough. The Festival takes place on North Lansdowne Avenue and in the Municipal parking lot across from the Theater. Local banks and businesses allow use of their parking lots for artist parking and staging to maximize street parking and other public parking lots for patrons. Designed to showcase Lansdowne's ongoing commitment to the arts, the Lansdowne Arts on the Avenue Festival annually features 90+ juried artists, music, performances, demonstrations, activities for the kids, food trucks, a beer garden, and broadcasting of the local NFL game on a large screen under the big tent.



## A BIT OF THE ARTS

Held at the Twentieth Century Club, A Bit of the Arts is our indoor Holiday Art Show & Sale. It includes 35 artists, more than a dozen musicians, and celebrates Black Friday and Small Business Saturday. It also provides opportunities for artists, retailers and shoppers to “Shop Small” and support local as they prepare for the holidays. This 2-day event draws over 300 shoppers each day, who are also encouraged to visit the CBD to continue their “Shop Small” experience.





LANSDOWNE  
**arts** ON THE **AVENUE**  
FESTIVAL

**95+**

Artists, Makers &  
Vendors

**1,500+**

In Attendance

**3 NETWORKS**

Covered by NBC10, 6ABC, and  
CBS3

**1000+**

Volunteer hours given

## JUNETEENTH

This annual event was held June 17, 2023 at the Lansdowne Avenue municipal parking lot and along the CBD retail corridor. The event started with a flag-raising ceremony on Borough Greene before moving to the big tent in the parking lot. The event featured lectures, prayer, dance, and music performances including gospel, blues and pop. Artists displayed African styles and culture, and vendors offered other merchandise and food. The LEDC prepared window posters picturing historical figures and events with narratives. These educational posters were displayed in retail shop windows and told the story of Juneteenth. This was the first year the LEDC produced the event which featured a performance tent and stage, and a day of activities and food.



## OUTREACH

The LEDC has grown into a large presence in the community, and works hard to engage new residents and visitors. The LEDC has two storefronts in heavy traffic areas, in the first block of N. Lansdowne Ave. and the first block of E. Baltimore Ave. Greeters are present to welcome the community at the Farmers Markets and at all LEDC events. The LEDC assembles voting registration information, community maps, Borough data and LEDC brochures into Welcome Packets for mailing to new Lansdowne homeowners. Welcome Packets are also distributed to apartment communities. The LEDC reproduces and prints all information distributed using its own in-house equipment and supplies.





JUNETEENTH 2023

18

Crafters &  
Vendors

250

Attendees

300+

volunteer Hours





# MARKETING & PROMOTION

The LEDC continually markets and promotes Lansdowne. The LEDC website welcomes residents and business owners and highlights the amenities and benefits Lansdowne offers. Our weekly e-newsletter has over 3,000 subscribers. The Arts Committee produces a monthly calendar of art events happening in and around Lansdowne. Promotion is spread over social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram. In 2024, the LEDC intends to extend social media outreach by including the social media accounts created by the former Lansdowne Arts Board.

Platform	Followers	% increase 2023
Utility Works Instagram	609	48%
Utility Works Facebook	518	22%
LEDC Instagram	673	26%
LEDC Facebook	1442	6%
Farmers Market Facebook	3731	4%



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# CBD BEAUTIFICATION & LITTER CONTROL

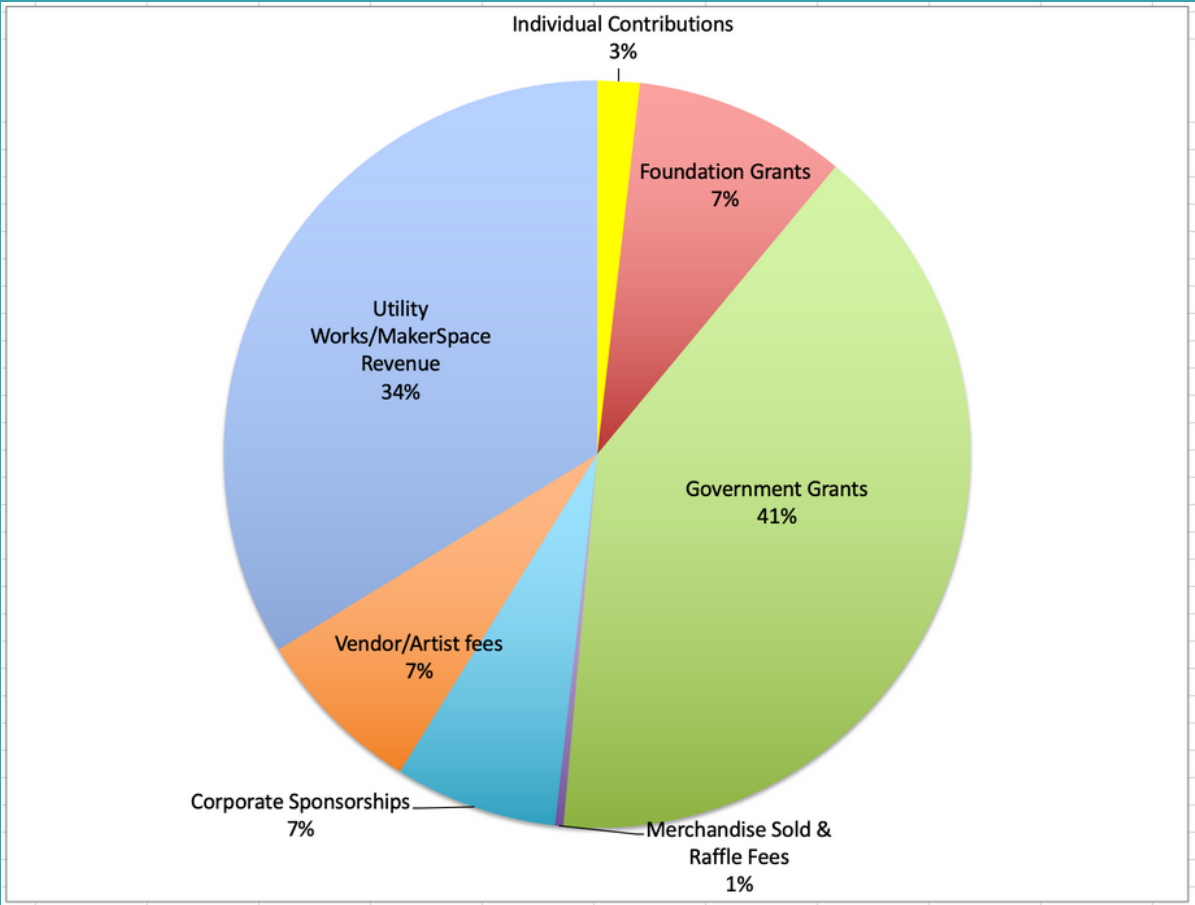
Through the CBD private Facebook platform, the LEDC shares videos and links on how to make individual shops, and the business district as a whole, more attractive and appealing to shoppers. Topics include creating spaces for pedestrians to linger and to extend visits to multiple locations, conducting joint promotions, and improving window displays.

Litter removal is a big part of making the CBD more attractive. Three times a week, an LEDC subcontractor picks up litter throughout the CBD and documents and reports problem areas.

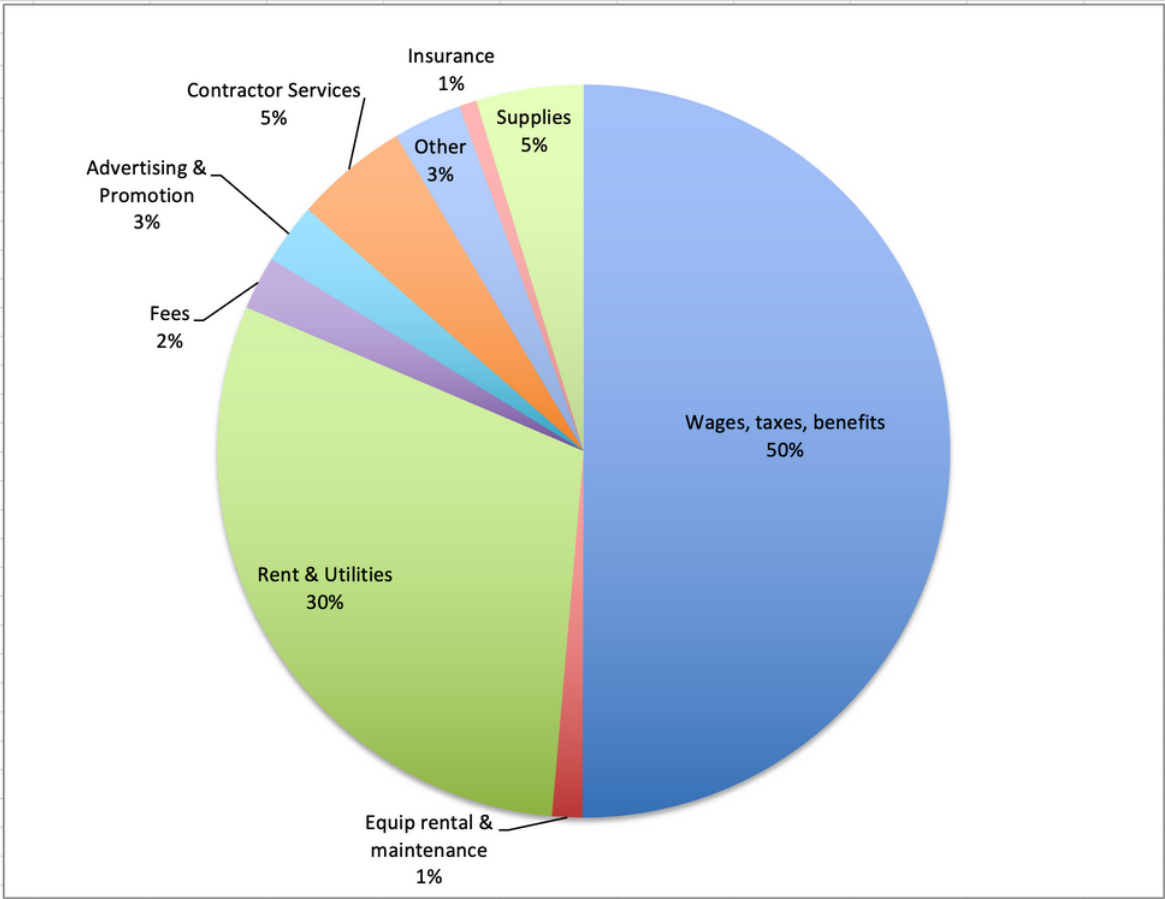
Looking forward into 2024 with opening of the Theater and the anticipated additional pedestrian traffic in the CBD, the LEDC hopes to work with the Borough to have a beautification study and plan created to unify the district and to improve trash disposal facilities.



# 2023 LEDC REVENUE: \$326,424



# 2023 LEDC EXPENSES: \$317,417





# 2023 SPONSORS

Blue Ribbon Partners (\$5,000 +)



Gold Sponsors (\$2,500)

Woodward Properties

Today's Child

Silver Sponsors (\$1,000)

Career Wardrobe

WSFS Bank

Humana

Bronze Sponsors (\$500)

Arthur J. Gallagher & Associates • Lansdowne Allied Youth Council

Robert W. Scott, P.C. • Conshohocken Brewing • The Carpenter Team

Lansdowne Business and Professional Association

LEDC Patrons (\$250)

Mark Galdo Tile • Campuzano General Contractors

Friends of the LEDC (\$100)

Jeffrey Hanson Educational Services • Sycamore Studios/Gallery 26

Pepper Pharmacy • Heffernan's Little Craft Shop

## INDIVIDUAL DONORS

### UP TO \$100

Cesaria Adote  
Terry Baraldi  
Kellie Bowker  
Deborah Brodeur  
Caryl Carpenter  
Eden Copeland  
Rachee Fagg  
Beth Heinly  
Clare Hughes  
Eileen Lloyd  
Suzanne McElroy  
Nancy Molyneaux  
Paul Murter  
Lauren Penrose  
Ellen Rahm  
Frederick Robinson  
Marilyn Rowse  
Catherine Schaefer  
Nadine Sidoriak

### \$100 - \$250

Skylar Bentley  
George Blum  
Kristin Bowman  
Grace Caputo  
Gloria & John Carpenter  
Barbara Federici  
Clare Finin  
Virginia & Mark Gavin  
Shelly Grant  
Grace Harpole  
Dorothy Hoffman  
Leigh Jackson  
John Kovach  
Aileen McHugh  
Richard Prigg & Ellen Lustgarten  
Kate Srinivasan

### \$251 - \$500

Jacqueline Salmon & Tom Hurster  
Susan Williams

### \$1,500 +

Violet & Bill Brown



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[www.LansdownesFuture.org](http://www.LansdownesFuture.org)

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