

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**COMMISSIONERS MOLDING FUTURE WORKFORCE WITH WIT-G
GRANT TO COLUMBUS CASTINGS**

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners today passed a resolution awarding a \$150,000 grant to provide training for 550 new, full-time employees at Columbus Castings. The agreement is the latest in a series of Workforce Innovation Training Grants (WIT-G) in which the county partners with a local businesses to provide funding for workforce training in return for commitments to hire new local employees.

Formerly Buckeye Steel, Columbus Castings traces its roots in Franklin County back to 1881 and Samuel and Prescott Bush, each the grandfather of a U.S. president, and has been in operation at its Parsons Avenue site since 1902. Today, the company manufactures the steel couplings used between rail cars for both passenger and freight trains.

“Columbus Castings has such a great history in Franklin County, and has been a true partner in every sense of the word on this grant,” said Board of Commissioners President, Marilyn Brown. “Their employees start out at a living wage, and the company has made a point of giving lots of second chances, hiring ex-offenders and some of our Job and Family Service clients already.”

Franklin County has placed six similar grants with local businesses going back to 2012 and totaling more than \$750,000. The county Economic Development and Planning Department administers the grants, ensuring that recipients are living up to their end of the bargain by hiring the new employees to which they’ve committed, and using the funds to train those workers for the future. Previous WIT-G grants have been made with companies such as SID Tools, IBM, and Allied Mineral, and are expected to result in almost 1,800 new local hires in Franklin County. The commissioners made a similar WIT-G grant to local business, CoverMyMeds earlier this month, which has committed to local hiring for more than 100 new positions.

“These grants are a tried and true jobs tool. We hope the rebirth of Columbus Castings will yield good jobs for this historic family neighborhood in Central Ohio,” said Commissioner Paula Brooks.

Columbus Castings boasts the largest single site steel foundry in North America, covering more than 90 acres, including 22 acres under one roof. It employs almost 700 local

residents already, and the company's current expansion represents a new \$15 million investment in Franklin County and its workforce.

"It's so gratifying to see Columbus Castings doing well again," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "They are a real local success story; a business of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that is helping once again to build our community for the 21st century and beyond. This WIT-G investment is a win for Columbus Castings, for its new employees, and for all of Franklin County."

With this morning's grant approval, funding (and hiring) will begin immediately.

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