



HARDIN COUNTY AND SURROUNDING REGION

Once part of the great black swamp and then American Indian territory, Hardin county was organized in 1833 and named after John Hardin, a revolutionary war officer. Kenton is the county's largest town and the county seat. With rich farmland and abundant timber, the county's main industry is agriculture. But the county also boasts many successful small and large businesses powered by a hardworking and resilient workforce. The county also is home to an old order Amish community. These private and plain people travel by horse and buggy and do not have electricity or telephones in their homes. Visitors can traverse scenic roadways past Amish farms and stop to purchase fresh produce, honey, baskets, quilts, soaps and more.

OHIO
NORTHERN
UNIVERSITY

ARTS AND CULTURE

The arts thrive in the local region. The Lima Symphony Orchestra has been around since the 1950s and every year provides a top-notch season of music. Ohio Northern hosts the symphony's Patriotic Pops concert in July on campus grounds.

The Veterans Memorial Civic and Convention Center in Lima and the Marathon Center for the Performing Arts in Findlay feature a variety of national and international performance groups throughout the year. They both offer reduced ticket prices for students for many shows.

ArtSpace/Lima supports the visual arts with gallery shows and special events throughout the year. And the Encore Theatre in Lima and Fort Findlay Playhouse put on outstanding plays with local talent several times a year.

DINING

Looking for delicious dining options? Nearby Findlay and Lima are home to many favorite national chains, but you'll also want to check out these local favorites.

In Bluffton, Lulu's Diner and Luke's Bar & Grill offer homemade goodness. And don't forget to pick up an after-dinner snack at Shirley's Gourmet Popcorn. In Kenton, there's Michael Angelo's Pizza, Midway Diner, Skinny's Tavern, Salsa's, and Jitterz Coffee Company. Just down the road in Mount Victory, the Plaza Inn Casual Family Restaurant has been serving customers since 1959!

Findlay boasts a vibrant downtown with trendy local establishments. Check out The Bistro, Logan's Irish Pub, Rossilli's, Vivir Modern Mexican; Mancy's Steakhouse, and Stix. Japan West features show chefs who cook at your table. Two local Findlay favorites have been around since the 1930s. Grab a burger and fries at Wilson's Sandwich Shop and top it off with ice cream at Dietsch Brothers, which was voted the No. 3 Best Ice Cream Shop in America on TripAdvisor. Dietsch Brothers also features homemade fine chocolates and candies.

Lima also offers hometown specialties. Check out Thai Jasmine for Thai cuisine and the Old Barn Out Back for comfort food served in, yes, a big red barn. The Met is a chic dining establishment, and Casa Lu Al serves pasta made from a secret family recipe. Kewpee Hamburgers and Happy Daz are old-fashioned diners, and The Beer Barrel (there's also one in Findlay) is a great place to grab a pizza and watch the big game. Old City Prime is a modern day classic American steakhouse.

ECONOMICS

Three indicators of a region's vitality are its businesses and industries, its health care systems, and its educational institutions. The Hardin County Chamber and Business Alliance, with its four divisions: Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, Community Development, and Tourism, is one of the largest, member-driven and business-focused organizations in Hardin County. With more than 300 local and regional members, the alliance serves the community to promote, cultivate and advocate for a prosperous business, educational and agricultural climate; strengthen the local economy; and improve the quality of life.

Graphic Packaging, Robinson Fin Machines Inc., SBHPP-Durez, Precision Strip and McCullough Industries - an Olympic Steel Company are top business and economic leaders in the Kenton area. Marathon Petroleum (Findlay), Honda of America Manufacturing (Marysville), and Crown Equipment Corporation (New Bremen) are just a few of the thriving large corporations in the area that hire ONU interns and graduates. The region also boasts many entrepreneurial and family-owned businesses. Citizens enjoy excellent health care provided by four health care systems: OhioHealth Hardin Memorial Hospital (Kenton), Blanchard Valley Health System (Findlay and Bluffton), Mercy Health Partners (Lima) and Lima Memorial Health System (Lima). And just a few hours from Ada are some of the nation's most highly rated hospitals - The Cleveland Clinic and The James Cancer Center at Ohio State University.

Ohio Northern is joined in the region by several institutions of higher education: Bluffton University, the University of Findlay, Rhodes State College, Ohio State University at Lima and Owens Community College. The close proximity of these institutions enables collaborative efforts and additional cultural opportunities for citizens.



EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

There's always something to see or do in the region. Ada is surrounded by communities awash with civic pride and tradition that sponsor numerous events and festivals. And the best part — many are free or low cost!

In November, check out the Window Wonderland and Christmas Parade in the Kenton Historic Courthouse District. The Wine and Chocolate walk is held in June and features local wine samples complimented by chocolate delicacies provided by the downtown merchants on the Kenton Courthouse Square. In July, Eats On The Streets showcases live music, specialty food trucks, a classic car show, vintage motorcycles and more.

Every Saturday morning from the first of May to the end of October, Bluffton hosts a Farmer's Market with vendors selling everything from fresh produce to homemade baked goods to crafts. With a Swiss Mennonite heritage, Bluffton has a quaint downtown with several interesting restaurants and shops. The village also is known for a spectacular lights display at Christmas, which kicks off with a Blaze of Lights parade the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

Findlay's highlights include the Flag City Balloon Fest in August, featuring hundreds of hot-air balloons, the Hancock Horizontal 100 (bike 100 miles in one day — all flat terrain); and a Halloween parade through downtown. In Lima, there's Square Fair, a huge annual festival that incorporates musical entertainment, arts and crafts, a 5K run, and food.

The Hardin County Fair, Hancock County Fair and Allen County Fair — with carnival rides, animals, fair food, musical entertainment and more — always draw a crowd.



RECREATION

If you're looking for wholesome fun, take your pick! There's miniature golf; movie theaters — including the Hi-Road Drive-in (one of just 10 drive-in theaters in Ohio); bowling alleys; and amazing seasonal places like the Kellogg Farms Sunflower Patch and Suter's Corn Maze (with pumpkins, cider press and yummy homemade doughnuts).

If you crave nature and outdoor activity, there's dozens of impressive public parks with canoing, hiking, disc golf, bike trails, skiing, sledding and more nearby. Check out the City of Kenton Parks, Hancock County Park District and the Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District.

The city of Kenton maintains five parks, including Saulisberry Park, which is located at a stone quarry, France Lake, and offers fishing, camping, hiking, and a dirt bike track. Kenton also has a public swimming pool with a slide, two diving boards and a raindrop waterfall.

Are you a history buff? Check out the Hardin County Museums, including the Hardin Historic Village and Farm. This turn-of-the-century farmstead showcases antique farm implements and pioneer age relics including a log house, woodworker's shop, jail, one-room schoolhouse, and Ada railroad building.

Winter simply isn't an excuse for slowing down here. Mad River Mountain is an awesome place for skiing and show-tubing less than an hour from campus. There's also ice skating at The Cube and roller skating at Edgewood Skate Arena. During warmer months, enjoy the great sports available on 5,800-acre Indian Lake in Logan County — boating, fishing, skiing and camping.

Chances are you can fulfill your shopping needs locally in the villages of Ada, Kenton and Bluffton, Findlay or Lima. Findlay and Lima have indoor malls — The Lima Mall and the Findlay Village Mall — that feature a variety of well-known retailers. And from discount clothing to electronics, sports equipment to arts and crafts, specialty stores abound in retail shopping complexes. Both cities also have quaint boutiques and resell shops.