



Immediate Release

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ArtsinStark Wins Award for Canton Arts District

At a March 3 ceremony Cleveland, ArtsinStark received an \$8,000 Dominion East Ohio “Community Impact Award” for its work on developing the Canton Arts District.

ArtsinStark successfully competed against 85 entries, submitted by organizations from throughout Northeast Ohio, with only 11 winners taking home the spoils. ArtsinStark board chair Bob Timken and ArtsinStark CEO Robb Hankins went to Cleveland to accept the award. “We were so honored to be recognized,” says Bob Timken, “but the Arts District is a total team effort along with the Canton Chamber, private business owners, and many wonderful local artists.” Since ArtsinStark just kicked off its Annual Arts Campaign to raise \$1,450,000 by May 26, the \$8,000 award will be used to help reach goal. The Community Impact Awards are sponsored by Dominion East Ohio and *Inside Business Magazine*.

ArtsinStark’s award was for work accomplished as part of *phase one* development of the Canton Arts District for which the planning began over three years ago. “At that time in downtown Canton there was the historic Canton Palace Theatre, one art gallery, and blocks of empty and deteriorating buildings,” says ArtsinStark CEO Robb Hankins. “No one was quite sure what to do next so we suggested trying the arts.”

ArtsinStark began by bringing partnerships together to work on three things to attract people and commerce back downtown: 1) public art, 2) live music and 3) art galleries/art studios. Today the Canton Arts District boasts four art galleries, 22 art studios; 30 new installations of public art; and a continuous run of monthly “First Friday” celebrations. “The change within the 4 – 6 blocks designated as the Canton Arts District has been dramatic,” says Timken.

The Stark County Educational Partnership, a partner with ArtinStark on the new SmARTS program designed to supercharge learning in schools, was also a winner in the Dominion East Ohio competition. It took home an award of \$8,000 for a project that gives high school students, living in low-wealth and rural neighborhoods, the chance to earn college credits free of charge. To date, this program has benefited 1,294 students who have earned almost 4,000 credit hours with savings ranging from \$410,000 to more than \$1.5 million.

“We support the extraordinary efforts of everyone involved in these award-winning community projects,” said Anne E. Bomar, senior vice president and general manager at Dominion East Ohio. “They have made a difference in the lives of the people they serve, and in the communities where we live and work.” Among those going to Cleveland to attend the awards luncheon were: ArtsinStark CEO **Robb Hankins**, ArtsinStark board chair **Bob Timken**, Canton Regional Chamber CEO **Denny Saunier**, and Canton Regional Chamber Director of Business Development & Strategic Projects **Dave Kaminski**.

For more information about the awards and to see a complete list of winners and projects, please visit www.dom.com or pick-up the March edition of *Inside Business Magazine* at your local newsstand.