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OCTOBER 2017

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Logistics Plus Shows Commitment to Erie in Ways Big and Small

Logistics Plus founder and CEO Jim Berlin has worked for many years to improve Erie's sometimes shaky self-esteem — long before the MyErie hashtag became popular.

No other project illustrates his commitment to Erie better, perhaps, than the renovation of historic Union Station.

Logistics Plus purchased the deteriorating building in 2003 and, under Berlin's leadership, oversaw its transformation into a mixed-use development. Now it the company's headquarters, along with a brewpub, a restaurant, and several retail shops. The colorful murals along Union Station's property lines, and the 50 flags flying from the top of the building make it unique in character and a standout on Erie's skyline.

Some of the earliest employees from Logistics Plus remember how hard Berlin fought to make his vision for Union Station come to life. "Almost down to the last person we thought he was crazy," said Fred Rizzuto, the

company president. "We thought it was going to be a huge money pit."

Jeremy Chaffee, the company's director of domestic operations, agreed. "He certainly saw something here that none of us saw at the time," he said. "Jim has always had a very positive image of what Erie can be and what it's becoming — his investment in this building, and his commitment to filling it with entrepreneurs really shows that."

It's not just the showy projects that Logistics Plus invests in, however. The company's commitment to the community can also be found in its internship program, which employs more than a dozen students each summer. Many of the interns will even continue with a full-time job at Logistics Plus after graduation.

"The company is also actively involved in downtown improvement projects," said Tracy White, the company's human resources manager. "Our commitment to the community is huge. We have

someone at nearly every meeting, at every event. And it's amazing to be a part of because all these little groups that are trying to make a difference, that are making noise — it's working. Little by little. This downtown resurgence we're experiencing shows that. We have a real gem here."

One of the newer retail shops on the ground floor of Union Station is Iron Empire Clothing, owned by R.J. and Jamie Messenger. The couple, outspoken about their support and belief in Erie's potential, embraced the #MyErie movement by selling a T-shirt with the hashtag. All proceeds went to creating a scholarship fund for local students.

R.J. Messenger said he and Berlin share the same philosophy about Erie. "That pride in who we are and what we can be is something that it seems like more and more people are coming around to, which is good to see," he said. "Jim's been pushing it for a long time."



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