

THE INSIDER

THE WEEK

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The big story: Eight Northeast Ohio projects redeveloping historic buildings to new uses were among 22 projects approved for state historic preservation tax credits. Five of the projects are in Cuyahoga County, two in Summit County and one in Portage County. The state awarded almost \$34 million in tax credits that would leverage \$200 million in private investments in 10 cities. The largest of the awards is for a \$5 million state historic preservation tax credit on the \$36 million renovation of Goodyear Hall in Akron by an affiliate of Industrial Realty Group of California.

Working together: The Case Comprehensive Cancer Center won renewal of its five-year grant from the National Cancer Institute. The renewal process gave the center an "outstanding" rating and came with a recommendation it "receive more than \$23 million during the course of the grant period," according to the center, which is based at Case Western Reserve University and operated in conjunction with the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals Case Medical Center.

Preparing for growth: Nestlé Prepared Foods Co. broke ground on its \$53 million Product Technology Center in Solon. Construction of the 144,000-square-foot research and development building will begin later this summer, and Nestlé expects it to open in 2014. The building will be dedicated to "frozen and chilled foods research that will serve Nestlé's business units worldwide," the company said. It will house offices and labs for about 100 staff members who will work side-by-side with chefs to create foods.

REPORTERS' NOTEBOOK

BEHIND THE NEWS WITH CRAIN'S WRITERS

So, guess who played 'Guess Who' in Lakewood?

■ Thank you, Ohio film tax credit. Because of you, I can say Scarlett Johansson lived at my father-in-law's house for a month. Yup, one of the world's most popular actresses and beautiful women is now practically, kinda, sorta, a member of my family.



Johansson

Ms. Johansson, along with her crew and two small dogs (one of which is purple), moved into the Lakewood home/palace in May, before she started shooting scenes around town for "Captain America: The Winter Soldier."

Sure, the movie ruined my commute to downtown Cleveland for a few weeks and would never have been shot here if it weren't for the state tax credit, but I can't complain. My extended family has benefited from her stay in a number of ways.

My father-in-law, Dick West — who owns West Roofing Systems of LaGrange, which also won a contract to fix the roof of a warehouse that housed explosives for the movie — received a sizable rent payment to get out of town for a few weeks.

Some of that Hollywood cash will trickle down to me: My wife, Laura, made all the arrangements for Ms. Johansson's stay and spent a month serving as concierge for her group. As payment, her dad has agreed to replace our rotting, 90-year-old front door (it's in print now, so he has to do it).

Then there Dick's cleaning lady, who

pocketed a few checks from ScarJo & Co. and now can bill herself as cleaner to the stars.

The Root Cafe in Lakewood probably should thank me as well Ms.

Johansson generated some local buzz when she made an appearance there. Probably because we included the eatery on a list of local establishments she and her posse should check out, per the suggestion of my fellow reporter Tim Magaw. He had no idea why I wanted his input.

We didn't meet Ms. Johansson, but she agreed to write a very nice note addressed to my 6-month-old twins, Kate and Charlie, wishing them "all the success, opportunity and magic life has to offer."

They left behind other stuff, too, such as shampoo (Laura's using it), orange Tic Tacs (I'm eating them) and Captain America paper plates (perfect for a July 4th picnic).

Also important to note: At some point, someone at the house played the board game "Guess Who?" — **Chuck Soder**

Preaching the gospel of competitiveness

Ohio's economy has underperformed the U.S. economy for years, retired Alcoa Inc. executive vice president Bill Christopher told a crowd of 300 at the annual meeting last week of manufacturing advocacy group



Wire-Net. But he thinks there are steps the business community can take to turn that situation around.

Mr. Christopher, CEO of Lakeview Consulting Enterprises, which helps small and midsize companies create growth strategies, chairs a task force to create a regional economic competitiveness strategy for Northeast Ohio. He said the goal of the group of business and philanthropic partners is to increase economic competitiveness in the 18-county region.

The task force found that of the region's so-called "driver" industries — the ones that strongly influence the economy — chemicals, health care and professional services were doing well. The majority of the manufacturing sector, especially in the automotive and metals industries, was struggling.

The task force came up with eight main strategies for growth, including putting an increased focus on retention and expansion of businesses, encouraging an environment of innovation, and taking advantage of opportunities to build an industry base around shale energy development. The availability of qualified employees will be a big issue, especially for manufacturing, Mr. Christopher said.

He encouraged the manufacturers at Wire-Net's event to work to change the perception of jobs in the industry and to train collaboratively, rather than waiting for an outside entity to take care of problems in training.

"That is going to be a challenge, and you're going to have to think differently about it," he said.

— **Rachel Abbey McCafferty**