

# HILLIARD

# Ohio

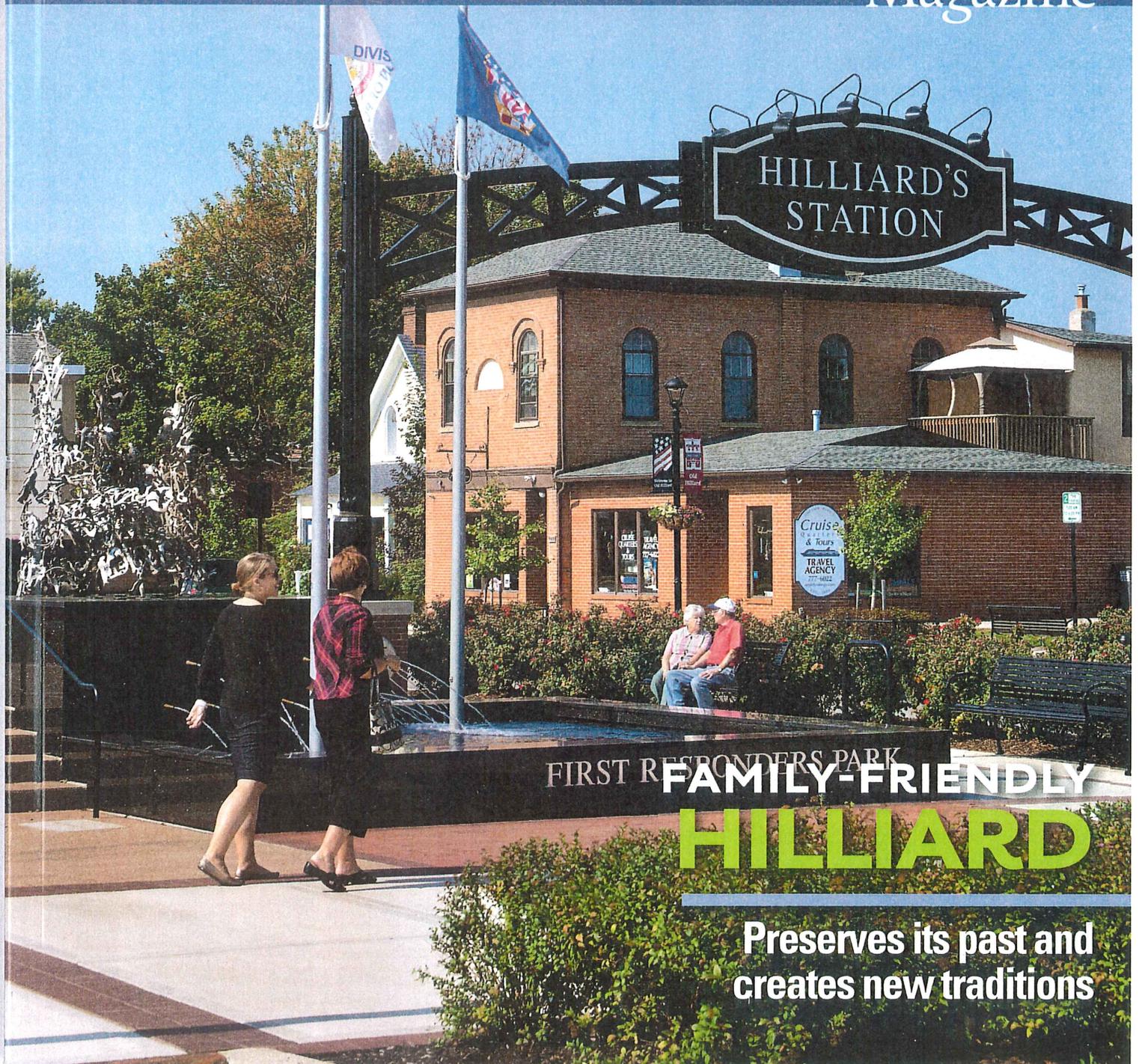


COLLECTOR'S EDITION

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THE BEAUTY. THE ADVENTURE. THE FUN.

Magazine



FAMILY-FRIENDLY

HILLIARD

Preserves its past and  
creates new traditions



# HILLIARD

## YEAR FOUNDED

1853

## LOCATION

Franklin County,  
10 miles northwest  
of Columbus

## POPULATION

28,435

## SIZE

11.1 sq. miles

## TYPE OF GOVERNMENT

Mayor-council plan,  
7-member council

One of the city's biggest boosters was telling out-of-towners that many residents of Hilliard like to ride bicycles through the pretty, historic part of town. Right on cue, the "perfect" family came around the corner riding bikes. Mom in front, brother and sister safely in the middle, and dad bringing up the rear.

"And, they *always* all wear helmets," says Christy J. Clark, executive director of Destination Hilliard, an enthusiastic civic organization, laughing at the good timing. "I am glad we paid that family to ride by."

OK, the bikes were just a happy coincidence. But many of the positives that make the city of 28,435 people a Best Hometown aren't the result of luck, fate or an inheritance from city founders. Residents want the best for their families, and work hard to create and keep the hometown they envision.

Residents choose the Columbus suburb for its convenience to a big city for jobs, retail and educational and entertainment opportunities. Hilliard, whose unofficial symbol is the optimistic sunflower, also has room to grow and nurture young families.

"We may not be as affluent as some neighboring towns. But we are sophisticated without being exclusive and welcome anyone who wants to make Hilliard a better place," says Destination Hilliard member Drew McCartt.

In the mid-1880s, Hilliard developed around railroad routes and became an important shipping point between farmers and markets. But

BY JILL SELL



agriculture quickly gave way to suburbia, and by the 1990s the city's population had swelled. With all the newcomers, traditions and vintage buildings could have quickly been lost. But enthusiastic residents have kept and improved the best and continue to add whatever else is needed for a memorable hometown.

Today, attractive over-the-street arched signs define Hilliard's Station, the community's historic center. Old Hilliard boasts many classic redbrick and clapboard buildings. The area is home to Old Hilliardfest, an annual homecoming weekend.

First Responders Park Memorial, dedicated on September 11, 2010, is within walking distance of Old Hilliard. The park is a moving tribute to emergency crews who were first on the scene on 9/11. Perhaps even more surprising is that Hilliard is the only town in the U.S. to display (at its Joint Safety Services Building) one of five flagpoles left standing after the 9/11 Ground Zero attack in New York City. The Pentagon owns the other four battered and bruised poles.

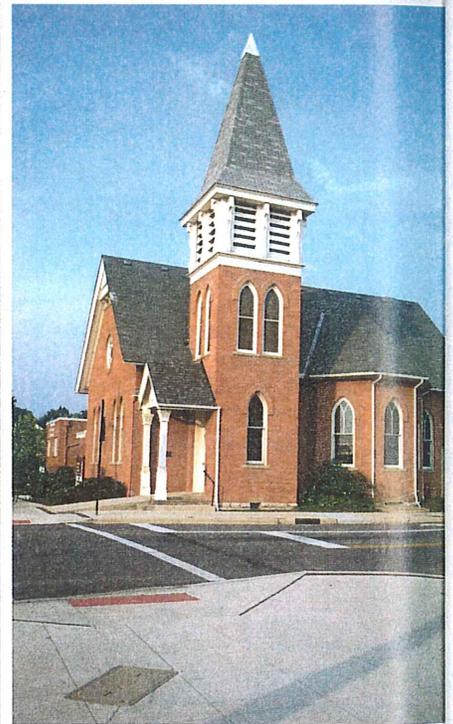
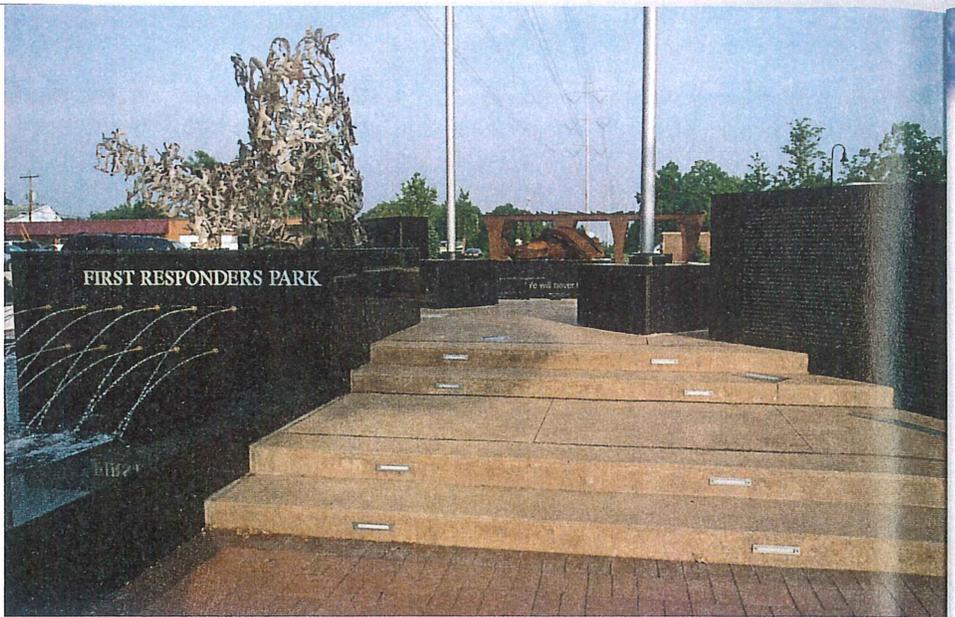
"I asked for a pole before anyone else did," says Hilliard's Mayor Don Schonhardt, who oversaw the raising of the first flag on the pole in his city on September 11, 2011.

Rated Excellent with Distinction by the state, the Hilliard City Schools excels not only in academics, but also in athletics, arts and community service.

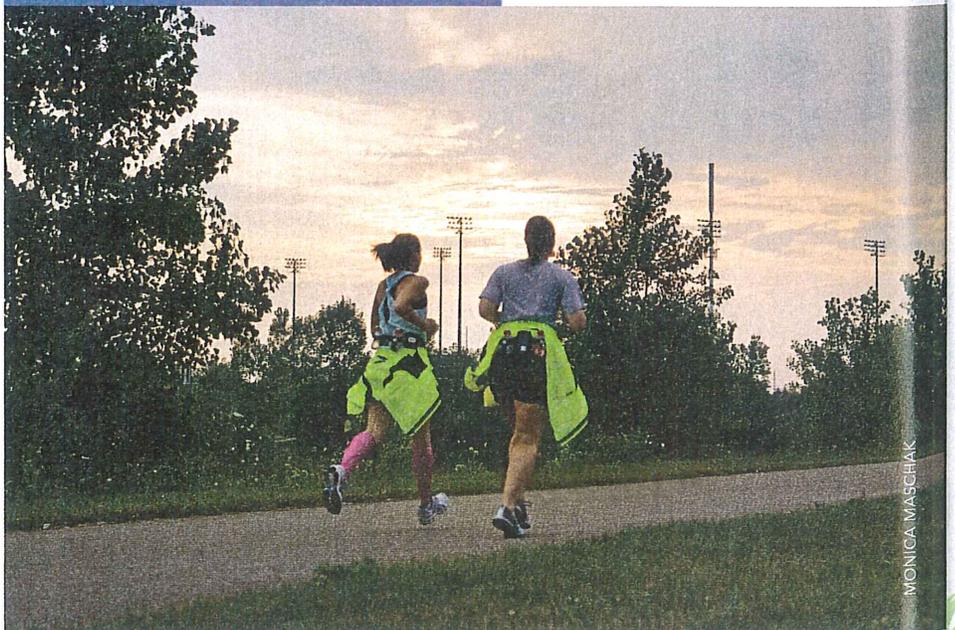
"We are the kind of community that does what is best for the kids, not necessarily best for the superintendent or athletic director," says Christy Farnbauch, president of the Hilliard Education Foundation.

Kids and families always come first in Hilliard. Twenty-two city parks, the 6.1-mile multipurpose Heritage Rails-to-Trails, and Aquatic Adventures, a full-service scuba and swim center, provide plenty of physical fitness opportunities.

Next year a new recreational park will be developed near the heart of the city, and plans have already been drawn for a community arts and cultural center. And of course, as home to the Franklin County Fair, families who grow up in Hilliard will enjoy horse shows, prize winning zucchinis and Ferris wheels for a long time to come.

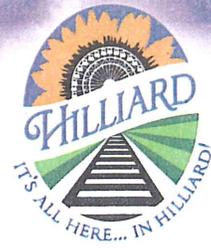


**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** A flagpole from Ground Zero stands at First Responders Park; historic buildings house Cornerstone Christian Fellowship and Old Bag of Nails Pub.  
**BELOW:** Hilliard boasts 22 city parks and a multipurpose trail.



MONICA MASCHAK

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