

## **Jason Duff, Founder / CEO**

Jason Duff is the Founder of Small Nation. He leads the Small Nation team in developing places, spaces and dreams for small towns and small town entrepreneurs across the country.

Jason spends most of his time with the company establishing the overarching vision, goals and purpose that drive Small Nation forward. He believes in being a hands-on leader however, and can be seen acting as chief negotiator, architect, mechanic, sounding board, and mentor for the Small Nation group of companies at any time.

Jason's passion for small businesses comes naturally. The 4th generation of a family of entrepreneurs, he has watched his great grandfather, grandfather, father and mother establish and grow successful businesses that impacted the community. As he grew up, he worked in most of these businesses, gaining first-hand knowledge of process, financial practices, and how "Hustling Hard" can bring great success.

After graduating from Ohio Northern University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the Dicke College of Business, Jason's entrepreneurial career began with the establishment of [Community Storage & Properties](#), the local self-storage company that allowed him to begin reinvesting in redevelopment of Bellefontaine. Soon after, he founded [COMSTOR Outdoor](#), an outdoor media company operating over 400 billboard faces in Ohio and Indiana. COMSTOR supports the promotion and marketing of Small Nation's development projects with traditional and digital billboards, and small business brand development. Community Storage and Properties and COMSTOR are part of the Small Nation group of businesses, all working together to reinvest in the people and places that matter within his community.

In 7 years, Jason and his Small Nation team have completely revitalized the city of Bellefontaine, Ohio. Using their "Hustle Hard" approach, they have managed to renovate more than 30 historic buildings that had been sitting empty for decades. Once the buildings were complete, they recruited tenants for 14 new business concepts; strategically identified to bring repeat commerce and animation to their downtown area. These businesses allowed them to create jobs for more than 190 local employees. They created 18 new loft apartments, adding a crucial residential component back to the city's downtown. The combination of retail, restaurant and residential have brought a once barren and decaying small town Main Street back to life.

Jason and the Small Nation team are now offering their lessons learned and "Hustle Hard Approach" to small towns across the country. A Small Nation Mastermind group is currently in development, with expectations to launch in the spring of 2019.

As part of Small Nation's efforts, Jason has become a partner with his teammates in the creation and operation of multiple restaurant concepts. [Six Hundred Downtown Brick Oven](#)

[Pizzeria](#), is an anchor for Bellefontaine's downtown and has been featured on the Food Network twice. In July 2018, Six Hundred was recognized by President Trump in a special reception in the rose garden. [Brewfontaine](#), an award-winning local craft beer bar, has earned Craft Beer Association's Award as the #1 Craft Beer bar in Ohio two years running. [Iron City Sports Bar](#) filled a much needed gap in the community, offering a place to gather, enjoy great food and watch the game. Their most recent partnership, [Bella Vino Events & Wine Room](#), brought a truly unique and much needed events venue to downtown Bellefontaine. New concepts are currently in development for 2019. Accomplishing the impossible through creating connections is what personally drives him.

Jason is a nationally published entrepreneurial thought leader and has written or been a contributor in Forbes, Inc. Fortune, Medium, Entrepreneur, The Huffington Post and Time. Jason writes and speaks about small businesses, entrepreneurship, the redevelopment and revitalization of small towns and his team's groundbreaking "Hustle Hard" approach. He is truly passionate about helping communities develop and grow their "entrepreneurial ecosystem."

He is a member of the Small Business Council for U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council, and serves on the Board of Trustees at Ohio Northern University.

Jason and his partner Lance live in Dublin, Ohio with their 5 year old pup MacGreggor. He is an accomplished musician and singer, and can be found enjoying a great bottle of wine whenever possible.