

FOCUS

THE MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE • JANUARY 2020

PROJECTION



2020

A DECADE OF GROWTH

IN THIS ISSUE

TECHSMITH'S WENDY HAMILTON TO LEAD CHAMBER BOARD IN 2020
CHAMBER AMBASSADORS HELP MEMBERS CONNECT, GROW & THRIVE
FOCUS ON SMALL BUSINESS: CASK & COMPANY



WENDY HAMILTON
 2020 Board Chair
 Lansing Regional
 Chamber of Commerce &
 CEO, TechSmith

Fulfilling the Mission of Serving Our Members

IT IS MY GREAT HONOR TO SERVE as the 2020 chair of the Lansing Regional Chamber (LRCC) of Commerce Board of Directors. I have great admiration for the role the Chamber plays in serving its members and its leadership in helping to build a better region.

It has also been my privilege to serve as CEO of TechSmith, a firm that was co-founded by my father, Bill Hamilton in 1987. TechSmith is a global leader in screen recording and screen capture software. Our company, probably very much like yours, struggled through the early years, but through the hard work and perseverance of our outstanding team members have managed to turn a small technology firm into a world leader in visual communication software.

Though it was not something I had planned on doing, I was pleased to join TechSmith in 2014, which was the culmination of a career in the technology industry. My family and I have come to enjoy our lives living and working in the Greater Lansing region.

I have always considered myself to be a customer-facing leader and am quite proud of the legacy that TechSmith has created in adding value to our customers. Upon joining the LRCC Board of Directors a couple of years ago, I quickly came to admire the same type of customer-centric approach this organization embraces in its everyday work.

All of us connected to the Chamber were thrilled with the recent news the organization received the prestigious 5-star accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Among the areas in which the Chamber was cited in receiving the award was advocacy—serving as the voice of business. In the past year, the Chamber government relations team has had an 87.5% legislative success rate. The Procurement Technical Assistance Center helped businesses in the tri-county area secure \$98 million in government contracts. Members also continue to give high marks to the Chamber’s networking activities that provide valuable opportunities to connect with other business leaders. Our robust communications platforms have provided members with the ability to communicate directly with their target audiences. In addition to FOCUS magazine, the LRCC Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn platforms reach thousands every month.

“Our board features the best and brightest and represent a diverse group of industry sectors, including insurance, financial services, high tech manufacturing, healthcare, technology, transportation, legal, advanced research and education.”

One of the first impressions that struck me as I became engaged with the Chamber was the wealth of outstanding leadership talent on our Board of Directors. Our board features the best and brightest and represent a diverse group of industry sectors, including insurance, financial services, high tech manufacturing, health care, technology, transportation, legal, advanced research and education. It is my goal in the next year that our board will identify innovative strategies to better leverage the collective talents these great leaders bring to the Chamber boardroom to better serve our members and region.

I look forward to working with my fellow board members, the excellent LRCC staff, and most importantly, our members in ways that further enhance this organization’s mission of helping businesses connect, grow and thrive. Your success is our success. My best to all of you for the most successful 2020! ■



JOIN THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Leadership Circle members are proven business and community leaders. We value their commitment and applaud their efforts to strengthen our region with their leadership and appreciate the important role they play in advancing our organization.



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Save the Date!

LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2020 ANNUAL DINNER

**Thursday, February 27
5 – 8:30 p.m.**

**Kellogg Hotel and
Conference Center**

Community Service Award:
Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU

Outstanding Small Business:
Hayhoe Asphalt

Sponsorship Information:

Ashlee Willis at michiganpremierevents@lansingchamber.org
517-853-6463 or www.lansingchamber.org.

LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER 2020 FIRST QUARTER EVENTS OVERVIEW

THURSDAY, JAN. 8 | DELTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at the Crown Plaza Lansing West, located at 925 S. Creyts Road, Lansing.

TUESDAY, JAN. 14 | THE JANUARY MEMBER MIXER will be hosted by Mayberry Homes. The event will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. at 1650 Kendale Blvd., Suite 200, East Lansing.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 15 | LANSING BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at Lansing Board of Water and Light, located at 1201 S. Washington Ave., Lansing.

TUESDAY, JAN. 21 | EAST LANSING - MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at Plante Moran, located at 111 E. Michigan Ave., East Lansing.

TUESDAY, JAN. 28 | THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (LRCC) ECONOMIC CLUB luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, East Lansing. Jeff Burnstein, president, Association for Advancing Automation, will discuss the impact of automation on jobs and future of automation beyond the factory floor.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 5 | DELTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at the Delta Township District Library, located at 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing.

MONDAY, FEB. 10 | THE FEBRUARY MEMBER MIXER will be hosted by the On Target Living, located at 211 Harrier Drive, Bath. The event will take place from 5 to 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEB. 11 | THE LRCC ECONOMIC CLUB luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, East Lansing. Joanne Bland, co-founder and former director, National Voting Rights Museum, will serve as featured speaker.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 12 | LANSING BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at Lansing Board of Water and Light, located at 1201 S. Washington Ave., Lansing.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19: | EAST LANSING - MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at Plante Moran, located at 111 E. Michigan Ave., East Lansing.

THURSDAY, FEB. 27 | THE LRCC ANNUAL DINNER will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center. The premier event will present two major awards – Community Service and Outstanding Small Business – to exceptional regional business leaders, Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU, and Hayhoe Asphalt.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5 | DELTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at the Delta Township District Library, located at 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing

TUESDAY, MAR. 9 | THE MARCH MEMBER MIXER will be hosted by Disability Network Capital Area, located at 901 E. Mount Hope Ave., Suite 100, Lansing. The event will take place from 5 to 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 | LANSING BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at Lansing Board of Water and Light, located at 1201 S. Washington Ave., Lansing.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 | EAST LANSING - MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE from 8 to 9 a.m. at Plante Moran, located at 111 E. Michigan Ave., East Lansing.

THURSDAY, MARCH 19 | THE LRCC ECONOMIC CLUB luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, East Lansing and feature a women's business leadership panel.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24 | THE ATHENA AWARD luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center and honor the 2019 ATHENA Award recipient.

STAY CONNECTED. STAY SOCIAL.



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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

LRCC
EVENTS

For more information about Chamber events, tickets or sponsorships, contact Ashlee Willis at michiganpremierevents@lansingchamber.org.

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CHAMBER MILESTONES

We'd like to offer a special salute to these great organizations that reached milestone anniversaries as the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) members this month. Thank you for your continued support through the years!

DAVID CHAPMAN AGENCY, INC.

30 Years

PLEUNE SERVICE COMPANY

10 Years

THE DAVIES PROJECT FOR MID-MICHIGAN CHILDREN

5 Years

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

30 Years

AARP

5 Years

DUSTY'S CELLAR

5 Years

DEWITT CHARTER TOWNSHIP

15 Years

AUDIOLOGY & HEARING AID CENTER

5 Years

MONEYBALL SPORTSWEAR

5 Years

MARTIN WAYMIRE

15 Years

CAPITAL AREA WOMEN'S LIFESTYLE

5 Years

SWAN ELECTRIC COMPANY, INC.

5 Years

CENTURY 21 LOOKING GLASS, INC.

10 Years

CAPITOL RESEARCH SERVICES, INC.

5 Years

WAGGONER FINANCIAL GROUP, THE

5 Years

CYPRESS HOME CARE, INC.

5 Years

LRCC members have unparalleled access to company and staff profiles on the LRCC website. To access and update this information at any point, visit lansingchamber.org and enter your username and password. If you have not yet logged onto the site, please follow the simple password reset instructions. Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.

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Cask & Company: The New Type of Restaurant

BY ISABELLA WAH, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

CASK & COMPANY HAS WORKED TO STAND ABOVE THE REST in the Greater Lansing area. Located on East Saginaw in Lansing, this casual eatery and bar have lots to offer with fresh cocktails and delicious, elevated food served in a comfortable and modern environment. Their menu blends Asian and modern American cuisine. This versatility makes it a great spot for everyone. With over thirty 60-inch LED TVs, Cask & Company is also fully equipped for your game day needs.

The kitchen and bar don't just stand out because of their cozy and modern feel, but also by the way they treat their employees. Cask & Company have made it their mission to provide their staff with top-notch benefits to help retain the highest level of talent. They have partnered with companies like Go Workout to offer a complimentary membership to all of their employees, while also providing the employees of Go Workout with a 10% discount at the restaurant. Additionally, Cask & Company provides an investment opportunity for all employees, offering them the opportunity to invest at their pace. The primary goal is to help the employees start an investment retirement strategy plan. They continue to put their employees' health and well-being first by also

offering tailored insurance plans, based on the needs of each employee.

The restaurant also gives back to the Greater Lansing community by partnering with local breweries to host a Tap Takeover Event, asking for donations of hats, gloves, and scarves for children in need.

Cask & Company is committed to ensuring the overall well-being of people, with that including not only their employees but also their customers. "It's all about the people, both internal and external," said Kurt Weaver, general manager.

By offering so many creative and unique benefits for their employees, Cask & Company is able to attract and retain top talent in the industry. All while providing their customers with top of the line service, amazing food, deals, and great ambiance.

If you are interested in knowing their specials you can find them on Facebook or visit their site www.caskandcompany.com. ■



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Bekum America: Celebrating 40 Years

BY MIRANDA SUSICK, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

BEKUM AMERICA CORP., THE GERMAN MAKER of extrusion blow molding machinery, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, and have begun a project that will allow the company to continue to grow.

On Nov. 27, Bekum America began its 40th-anniversary celebration by breaking ground at its Williamston headquarters.

Bekum's planned expansion will add 40,000 square feet of manufacturing space and 7,400 square feet of office space. This growth will allow Bekum America to create 20 additional jobs, increasing its total workforce to 150 employees.



“The groundbreaking on our new facility was a great kickoff to our 40th-anniversary celebration with our dedicated employees,” said Steve London, president and chief operating officer of Bekum America. “This event is the perfect opportunity to celebrate all the individuals who complete Bekum.”

Bekum America is the U.S. operation of German parent company, Bekum Maschinenfabriken GmBH. Bekum Maschinenfabriken celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

The company's blow molding machinery is used to make plastic bottles, containers, and a variety of other major plastic parts.

“The Bekum team has continually been providing state-of-the-art products for our clients,” said London.

Their machines are used across several industries, including automotive, dairy, food and beverage, personal care, industrial packaging, medical and others.

State leaders have recognized the impact that Bekum America has had on the community and the importance of its recent milestone. Senator Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Representative Elissa Slotkin both presented Bekum America with Certificates of Special Congressional Recognition for their achievement.

Bekum America's success is attributed not only to the quality and innovation of their machines, but also the exceptional service that every employee provides its customers.

“Our legacy and longstanding success and trust within the plastics industry begins with our amazing staff,” said Martin Stark, chairman of Bekum America and a member of the Plastics Hall of Fame.

Another feat that Bekum America is proud to have accomplished is its award-winning apprenticeship program, established in 1994. The apprentices complete 8,000 hours of hands-on training in a trade of their choosing and obtain an associate's degree from Lansing Community College, paid for by Bekum America.

The program allows its apprentices to learn directly from those with the most knowledge and experience, but also allows Bekum America to grow its workforce. Of the program's 21 graduates, 15 are still employed at Bekum.

“I am confident Bekum will continue to set the standards for another 40 years

and beyond,” said Stark. “We are humbled and proud of our past, and now look to the future with complete confidence.”

Bekum America has stayed true to its roots for the past 40 years and will continue to do so for decades to come. The facility expansion and the future growth that comes with it are symbols of Bekum's commitment and dedication to its employees, customers and the local community. ■



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Wendy Hamilton of TechSmith to Lead Lansing Regional Chamber 2020 Board of Directors

MIKE ZAMIARA OF NIOWAVE TO SERVE AS CHAIR-ELECT



Hamilton



Dean



Zamiara

WENDY HAMILTON OF TECHSMITH will serve as the 2020 board chair of the Board of Directors of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC). Hamilton succeeds Patrick Dean of Dean Transportation, who will remain on the board as past chair. Mike Zamiara of Niowave will serve as chair-elect and is in line to serve as board chair in 2021.

“It is my great honor to serve as the 2020 chair of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors,” said Hamilton. “I have great admiration for the role the Chamber plays in serving its members and its leadership in helping to build a better region.” ■

MEMBER NEWS

LEAP Public Art for Communities Grant Swings Pendulum in Favor of Charlotte

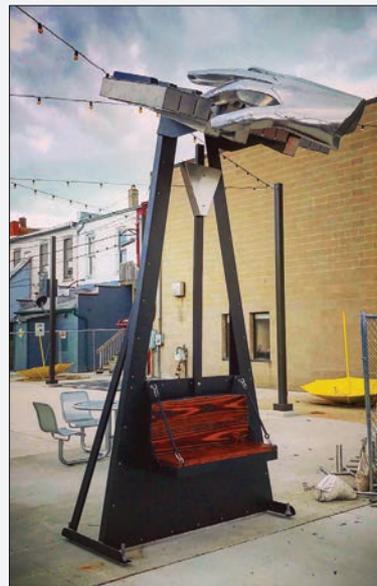
\$10,000 LEAP GRANT FUNDS INTERACTIVE PERMANENT ART AND SPURS ADDITIONAL FUNDING

THE PENDULUM OF SUCCESS SWUNG in favor of the community Nov. 21 in downtown Charlotte. Sitting at the center of a momentous blight reduction project in what will be called “Timepiece Park,” a new interactive permanent public art piece funded by the Lansing Economic Area Partnership’s (LEAP) Public Art for Communities (PAFC) grant program along with PNC Foundation, was officially unveiled.

“At its core, community development is about creating opportunities that bring people together,” says Tim Lewis, former mayor of Charlotte. “Timepiece Park and the beautiful sculpture bring a positive change that will inspire residents and visitors to gather and enjoy a wonderful experience downtown.”

Envisioned as the source of the community’s momentum, Timepiece Park is shaping up to change the face of downtown Charlotte near city hall. CharlotteRising in partnership with the City of Charlotte, was awarded one of three \$10,000 2019 LEAP Public Art for Communities grants, which acted as a catalyst for securing the additional funding sources needed to complete the park project fully.

“Through this art piece, the community can come together through a shared experience,” says Lisa Barna, executive director, CharlotteRising. “Standing where once a derelict building stood, this breathtaking sculpture within the new Timepiece Park is a testament to the power of arts and culture, and I applaud our dedicated community for bringing it to life.”



“Keeping Time,” a 12-foot interactive metronome crafted by locally prominent artist Ivan Iler, reminds all that Charlotte’s momentum has been and will continue to be set in motion through the community’s commitment to keeping its beat secure — a theme found at CharlotteRising’s core since its inception in 2016.

The 2019 LEAP PAFC grant award to CharlotteRising/ City of Charlotte is the second grant Charlotte has received since the program began eight years ago. Since 2012, LEAP has invested \$240,000 in growing a collection of strategically placed, permanent, public art throughout the Tri-county region, with the PNC Foundation as a strong supporter. The PNC Foundation began contributing \$10,000 annually to the program each year in 2015, which helped expand the program and number of pieces funded each year.

“PNC’s ongoing support of LEAP’s public art grant program reflects our Main Street values and commitment to the communities where we conduct business,” said Timothy Salisbury, PNC regional president for mid-Michigan. “This program is an example of what can be accomplished through strong public-private partnerships.”

The Public Art for Communities grant program is designed to elevate critical areas in need of further economic development, with an aim toward enhancing community image, and ultimately to keep and attract top talent. With more than 39 individual permanent pieces funded, the PAFC program has contributed in a significant way to the region’s evolving aesthetic appeal for a broad spectrum of businesses. ■

Ambassador Committee Helps Members Connect, Grow and Thrive

YOU KNOW THEIR SMILING FACES, gold nametags and willingness to help whenever needed. The Ambassador Committee for the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is comprised of business and community leaders, who dedicate their time and efforts to advance the LRCC’s mission of helping businesses connect, grow and thrive.

Through their volunteer efforts, they engage with current and prospective members and help them find value in the tools, resources and relationships available to them through a Chamber investment. The Ambassadors are a critical extension of the LRCC team and provide a vital service to the membership.

“Our Ambassador Committee continues to be a premier volunteer opportunity and we are pleased to have 20 outstanding individuals championing the Chamber message,” said Christine Zarkovich, business development manager and Chamber liaison for the Ambassadors.

Special recognition to our 2019 Ambassadors officers: Corey Rees, Capitol Region Airport Authority - Chair, Zack Armstrong, Siena Investments Williamston - Vice Chair and Ashley Pearson, Rehmann - Secretary. Zack will move into the Chair role for 2020 and he will be joined by Sara Majeske, University Club of MSU as Vice Chair and Lisa Fisher, Lisa Fisher Business Training & Consulting as Secretary.

“I am really excited to lead this passionate and engaged group of Chamber members,” said Zack Armstrong, vice chair of the LRCC Ambassador Committee. “We look forward to another great year helping members and prospective members connect, grow and thrive.”



We are always accepting applications for future open Ambassador positions. To request an application or for any questions, please contact Christine Zarkovich at (989) 225-6628 or czarkovich@lansingchamber.org. ■

2020 LRCC Ambassador Committee

- Zack Armstrong, CFA, lead advisor, Siena Investments - **Chair**
- Sara Majeske, director of membership, University Club of MSU - **Vice Chair**
- Lisa Fisher, owner, Lisa Fisher Business Training & Consulting - **Secretary**
- Daria Buzun, account executive, Extend Your Reach
- Chaz Carrillo, independent agent associate, David Chapman Agency
- Alando Chappell, manager of water and steam distribution, Lansing Board of Water and Light
- Ruthie Doering, project geologist, Triterra
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- Thomas Hamp, business coach, Advicoach
- Steve Hershfield, senior associate, CBRE
- Brian Johnson, sales team, MarxModa
- Shawn Mach, attorney, Klug Law Firm
- Chad Munce, digital sales manager, WLNS-TV
- Nicholas Nauta, financial planner, Shotwell Rutter Baer
- Luan Nguyen, dispositions relationship manager, Cinnaire
- Corey Rees, planning and design manager, Capitol Regional Airport Authority
- Barb Schram, independent distributor, Shaklee
- Dan Wilkinson, commercial loan officer, MSUFUCU

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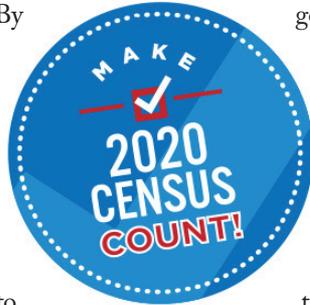


MessageMakers

messagemakers.com

U.S. Census 2020: Your Participation Matters

IT HAPPENS ONCE EVERY TEN YEARS. By April 1, every household will receive an invitation to participate in the U.S. Census. There are several important reasons why every citizen needs to be counted in the census.



government and if it doesn't come here it will go to another state."

The other reason that participation is critical is for political representation.

"Our Congressional seats are divided up based on population," said Singh.

"Michigan has lost population over the past couple of census periods. Other states that are growing faster are adding Congressional seats while we have lost a couple of seats. This year we could lose one or two more seats. That means the political influence of Michigan diminishes."

One significant change this year is that the people can complete the census online instead of the traditional paper forms.

"What people will begin to see in March is a postcard inviting them to go online and fill out the census," said Singh. "We are trying to get as many people as possible to realize they can complete the form very quickly online."

Paper forms will still be available for those unable to complete the census online. You also have the option of calling the Census Bureau and completing the form over the phone. For more information, visit 2020census.gov.

U.S Census 2020 Timeline

- **April 1:** Census Day is observed nationwide. By this date, every home will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 census. Once it arrives, you should respond in one of three ways: online, phone or mail. When you respond to the census, you should tell the Census Bureau where you live as of April 1, 2020.
- **April:** Census takers begin visiting college students who live on campus, people living in senior centers and others who live among large groups of people. Census takers also begin to conduct quality check interviews to help ensure an accurate count.
- **May:** The Census Bureau will begin to visit homes that haven't responded to the 2020 U.S. Census to make sure everyone is counted. ■

"It is part of our constitutional duty as Americans," said Sam Singh, who is serving as co-director of local efforts to promote the census along with Andi Crawford.

Most of the financial resources that come back to Michigan are divided up to the state and local communities by population and the census itself. For every person not counted, it is potentially up to \$3,000 of federal tax money that doesn't come back to our state and community.

"Multiply that over ten years and it is \$30,000 per person that we lose out on," said Singh. "People care about road funding, early childhood programs, funding for schools, Medicaid and Medicare. Those dollars come back to Michigan through the census count. It is already money we are paying the

Love Lansing

MEET LIKE A LOCAL

The GLCVB's role is to market the Capital Region as a travel destination and our vision is to inspire visitors and residents alike to love Lansing as much as we do. We understand what makes this community great. Work with us to host your next meeting or event and together we can grow the local economy while showcasing our hometown pride. Contact us today!

Stable Growth Forecast for 2020 Economy

PNC ECONOMIST TELLS LANSING ECONOMIC CLUB THAT MICHIGAN AND U.S. ECONOMY ON SOLID FOOTING FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

THE LONGEST ECONOMIC EXPANSION IN HISTORY

will continue in 2020 and Michigan will continue to ride the wave despite an anticipated slowdown in manufacturing. That was the message from William (Bill) Adams, senior economist and vice president, PNC Financial Services Group, in an appearance before the Lansing Economic Club on Dec. 10.

“Economic growth will slow a bit in the first half of the year, but pick-up again in the second half,” said Adams. “We forecast GDP growth at 1.5% for 2020.”

Adams said the combination of continued low-interest rates, low unemployment, increasing wage growth, high consumer confidence and robust household spending bode well for economic growth in the next year. He expects a modest slowdown in auto sales, but still forecasts volume even with this year at about 16.3 million vehicle sales. He says recovering housing prices are good news for Michigan.



“We are back to where we were at the beginning of the last recession on prices,” said Adams. “That means more real estate equity, which contributes to high household income.”

Filling the talent pipeline will continue to be a big challenge for business in the next few years. Adams noted as recently as 2012-2013, companies could hire whomever they wanted. Today, business owners are forced to be more creative in their hiring approach.

“It will continue to be a job-seekers market,” said Adams. “A differentiator for business will be how well you can train people and get them up to speed.”

Adams says that PNC’s small business survey shows a great deal of optimism among small business owners for the next year. Approval of the USMCA (NAFTA replacement) trade deal will also be a strong positive in 2020. ■

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Robots Create Jobs: The Impact of Automation on the Workforce

JANUARY ECONOMIC CLUB SPEAKER TO SHARE THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF ROBOTS, AUTOMATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

THE USE OF ROBOTICS, AUTOMATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

is changing the way we work. We shouldn't be afraid of these technologies and how they impact jobs today and into the future; we should instead welcome this tech into our work and personal lives while using them to our advantage to compete globally. That is the message that Jeff Burnstein will share with the Lansing Economic Club at its upcoming luncheon on January 28. Jeff Burnstein is the president of the Association for Advancing Automation, the parent group of the Robotic Industries Association. Together, these trade groups represent over 1,250 global companies involved in robotics, vision, motion control and motors and related automation technologies.



Burnstein

FOCUS magazine recently visited with Burnstein and talked about the impact of automation on the workforce.

Focus: One of your messages is that people should not be afraid of automation, but rather embrace it — Would you explain that?

Burnstein: It is easy to focus on our fears. If we do that, we miss out on the opportunities. People say these new technologies will put people out of work. What we should focus on is how automation will make our lives easier. In addition to how it makes companies more productive, think about what is possible because of robots and A.I. What if one day we do have lots of driverless cars on the road? Auto accidents will likely drop substantially. We have about 40,000 people a year die in auto accidents in the U.S. What if we could reduce that by 90%? Look at the medical field. Already robotics and A.I. are helping us find cures for diseases, which can allow us to live longer and healthier lives.

Focus: There is a fear that automation eliminates jobs. Is there evidence that automation increases jobs?

Burnstein: We've looked at a 22-year period where we have charted robot sales in the United States versus unemployment rates. Every time robot sales in the U.S. go up, unemployment goes down. When robot sales go down, unemployment goes up. While that doesn't prove that robots are creating those jobs, it certainly argues against the claim that robots are job killers. From 2010-2018, about 180,000 robots were sold in the U.S. During that period, over 1.2 million new manufacturing jobs were created. During that period, unemployment fell from above 10% to below four percent. The real threat to jobs in America is when companies can no longer compete. That is when all the jobs are at risk.

Focus: How can businesses take advantage of automation and artificial intelligence to compete globally?

Burnstein: We already see businesses in manufacturing use robots in ways that make them be stronger global competitors. Look at what's going on in warehousing and distribution centers. Amazon has become one of the world's leading users of robots because to fulfill our desire to have packages delivered quickly, companies are having to use robotics and A.I. to automate their processes. You're seeing robots used in the food processing industry. In agriculture, A.I. is



telling farmers when to water and how much to water. Companies are using robots to pick strawberries. There are so many areas where people are starting to understand that robotics can help them be more successful.

Focus: What is the next significant advancement in automation/artificial intelligence?

Burnstein: What is going on today is smart manufacturing, Industry 4.0, Internet of Things-basically connected machines. For instance, a refrigerator sending via sensor information that there is no milk where the milk usually goes and placing the order. What if you could do a lot more things with those connected devices? What about robots in our homes that clean the house or cook the meals? What if you had a robot that could assist older people so they could stay in their homes longer and didn't have to go into an assisted living facility? Those are the kinds of things that are difficult challenges but could be down the road and have a significant impact on our lives. ■

January Economic Club

Jan. 28

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center

Speaker: Jeff Burnstein, president

Association for Advancing Automation

For registration information, contact Ashlee Willis at
MichiganPremierEvents@lansingchamber.org.

A DECADE OF GROWTH



“In the past decade, the landscape has shifted dramatically and has been radically reshaped by transformational projects throughout the tri-county region.”

If you were to lay images of the skyline in Greater Lansing from a decade ago alongside those of today, it would be a stark contrast, to say the least.

In 2010, the region, much like all of Michigan was still in the midst of a devastating recession. Financing for new development had been virtually non-existent for several years. The auto industry was struggling to regain its footing – ditto for the housing industry, engulfed in a sea of foreclosures.

A tremendous amount of economic growth has occurred since 2010.

“Look at the Michigan Avenue corridor and the growth you see there,” said Tim Daman, president and CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC). “You look at the growth of the insurance sector, financial services, a new headquarters for Michigan State University (MSU) Federal Credit Union, a \$100 million expansion at Jackson National, a couple hundred million expansion at Auto-Owners, \$130 million at AF Group and a new downtown headquarters and power plant by the Board of Water and Light. We see it in manufacturing with a billion in investments by General Motors and research at MSU, most notably the world-class Facility for Rare Isotope Beams.”

Bob Trezise, president and CEO of Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) notes that the diversification of the regional economy has played a significant role in creating growth.

“Ten to 15 years ago, our region was almost totally dependent on the auto industry, state government and MSU,” said Trezise. “Today, our local economy

includes orthopedic manufacturing, particle accelerator work, creative agencies, biotechnology and nano technology. Also, insurance and agriculture have all accelerated.”

In the past decade, the landscape has shifted dramatically and has been radically reshaped by transformational projects throughout the tri-county region. The downtown core of Lansing and East Lansing have been reinvigorated by a combination of mixed-use commercial, residential and retail establishments. More housing, restaurant and entertainment options are attracting a new generation of urban dwellers who bring energy and excitement to the city centers.

“We’re in a dramatically better position as a market and as an economy,” said Van W. Martin, CCIM, SIOR, CRE, president and chief executive officer, Martin Commercial Properties. “Capital markets are healthy. Consumer confidence is much higher.”

Developer Pat Gillespie says the Lansing region is building a good base, which bodes well for the future.

“Any time you have the diversity we have, medical, insurance, manufacturing, celebrating students plus a lot of the urban developments happening in East Lansing and Lansing, those provide more stability,” said Gillespie, president of the Gillespie Group. “Our growth hasn’t been in one area, which has a better longer-term trajectory for the community.”

MICHIGAN AVENUE CORRIDOR: THE CONNECTING LINK FROM DOWNTOWN LANSING TO MSU

Nowhere is the transformation of the past decade more evident and arguably more critical than the Michigan Avenue Corridor, which stretches from

the State Capitol to Meridian Township.

“More than any other thoroughfare, the Michigan Avenue corridor is the face of our region,” said Daman. “Our identity should serve as a statement to the rest of the world of who we are and where we are going.”

Pat Gillespie was one of the first – by building the Stadium District, a 100,000-square-foot, multi-use building directly across the street from Cooley Law School Stadium. Gillespie says the project was a confidence booster for downtown.

“It helped Lansing with its image,” said Gillespie. “The Stadium District let people feel ‘we can be hip. We can do what these other cities are doing.’ It set the tone for positive growth in the last 10 years.”

In the post-recession era, development along Michigan Avenue has flourished. Young professionals are increasingly moving into the downtown area, which has led to more housing and multi-use developments like The Venue in East Town, a \$6 million project that has transformed the 500 block of Michigan Avenue on Lansing’s east side. Restaurants and entertainment options have increased dramatically.

The Sparrow Michigan Avenue campus continues to undergo a significant upgrade as witnessed most recently by the opening of the Herbert-Herman Cancer Center. The new cancer center is part of the more than \$285 million in construction and information technology projects by Sparrow in five years.

Located near the historical intersection of M.A.C Avenue and Albert Avenue and in the heart of downtown East Lansing, Center City has transformed

East Lansing's skyline and redefined what it means to live in downtown East Lansing. Harbor Real Estate Advisors constructed a \$125 million multi-generational, mixed-use development that includes the Landmark on Grand River, Newman Lofts, a small-format Target store, public parking and 24,000 square feet of retail along Albert Avenue.

“East Lansing is much more connected to MSU,” said Trezise. “It looks like a significant city now with fun and excitement and filled with new people, which will drive new retail downtown.”

Two projects on Michigan Avenue in various stages of construction are among the most exciting the Corridor has witnessed. Gillespie Group is renovating the 600 block of Michigan downtown, site of a former tire store and gas station. The \$40 million project includes a long-awaited grocery store operated by Meijer. The project also consists of a hotel, including bar and restaurant run by Concord Hospitality, residential units and parking. Gillespie hopes to have everything open by November 2020, which he says should boost traffic downtown after 5 p.m. and on weekends.

“The grocery store alone will change the traffic pattern dramatically,” said Gillespie. “You add a hotel that is most busy on weekends and nights. Those two will put more pedestrians on the street. The whole area will feel a lot more alive.”

One of the largest and perhaps most dramatic transformations in the region is the Red Cedar project. The \$270 million project covers 35.5 acres and will transform the long-abandoned Red Cedar golf course on the eastern edge of Lansing into a six-building development by Continental/Ferguson Lansing LLC. The project will also include 1,100 beds of student housing, 150 market-rate apartments, two hotels and an assisted living and memory-care facility. Plans also call for several restaurants, retail and a public park with an open amphitheater complete with a connection to the Lansing River Trail. Groundbreaking was held in October and developers hope to have the project completed by fall 2022.

“Our project puts in place the catalyst for opportunities that continue to appear along the corridor,” said Christopher Stralkowski, MSED, executive project manager, Ferguson Development.

Stralkowski says Lansing's only full-service hotel is needed in the region to support and showcase MSU and Lansing as the Capitol City and five major insurance companies.

“I believe it allows the Lansing region to show what it has to offer for people who visit and for people who want to relocate here,” said Stralkowski. “Due to the lack of a full-service hotel, people have been sent to Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor when they have been visiting this region. The idea that we will now be able to put those people along our most significant corridor and highlight what Lansing has to offer is a tremendous marketing piece.”



Capital City Market will bring a long-awaited grocery store to downtown Lansing. The Meijer store will be the second store of the company's urban market format. Courtyard's hotel on the 600 Block brings a second hotel to downtown Lansing — sure to boost the region's convention industry.



The \$270 million Red Cedar Project may be the single most transformational project along the Michigan Avenue Corridor.

The Red Cedar project is a result of many years of planning and conversations. Stralkowski says the fact the project has come to fruition is a testament to the engagement of local officials, community leaders and citizen activists who collaborated to make the project a reality.

THE U.S 127 CORRIDOR FROM SOUTH LANSING TO ST. JOHNS

The U.S 127 corridor has come into sharper focus as a development lynchpin as a result of a \$1 billion in investment from two projects—McLaren Greater Lansing's (MGL) new hospital campus on the south end of Lansing and Glanbia Nutritional's Dairy Processing facility in St. Johns.

McLaren is investing in South Lansing to consolidate its two current Lansing hospital facilities into a new health care campus adjacent to MSU. McLaren and MSU are also expanding partnerships on research, education and clinical services.

The new health care campus is being developed at the MSU Foundation's University Corporate

Research Park, located between Collins Road and U.S. 127. The campus will house a 240-bed state-of-the-art hospital, cancer center, ambulatory and other facilities to support health care delivery, educational opportunities and medical research. When fully complete, the health care campus will be home to over 1,000 physicians, researchers, educators and other members of the academic and medical team. The current timeline to open the facilities is late 2021 or early 2022.

“This health care campus is about so much more than state-of-the-art facilities,” said MGL's CEO Kirk Ray. “It has been, and always will be about the people who make us a destination for health care beyond mid-Michigan. That all starts with the people who are coming here every day to put their talents into this project to make it a reality.”

Glanbia Nutritional opens its state-of-the-art dairy processing facility north of St. Johns this year. This ultra-modern, large-scale cheese and whey production operation as part of a joint venture with Dairy Farmers of America and Select Milk Producers,

A DECADE OF GROWTH



The City Center project has given downtown East Lansing a big city feel and is leading to spinoff development in the area.



McLaren Greater Lansing's new hospital enhances the region's status in healthcare.

Inc. The \$555 million project sits on 146 acres, a portion of which was land that Glanbia executives said met key selection criteria in terms of strategic location relative to milk supply, strong transport links, a positive business environment, and labor availability.

REVITALIZED NEIGHBORHOODS. REINVENTED SUBURBS. REIMAGINED SMALL TOWNS

The past decade has seen a resurgence of many neighborhoods. REO Town has begun a revitalization that mirrors the renaissance that Old Town has enjoyed for the past 20 years. Without question, the catalyst that sparked the REO Town revival was the decision by the Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL) to build its first new plant in 40 years in REO Town. The \$183 million project included the BWL's first natural gas-fired electric generating facility and its first cogeneration facility. The REO Town facility was lauded as a major victory for the environment in that it slashed BWL's greenhouse gas emissions by 50% and reduced carbon by 20%. The plant allows BWL to burn 350,000 less tons of coal each year. The REO Town project included space to serve as the new BWL headquarters, bringing 180 people to REO Town which has served as an impetus for supporting many neighboring retail establishments.

As much of the development focus has been in urban downtown areas of Lansing and East Lansing, suburban areas have been also been looking at their own brand of reinvention. Reflecting a national trend, shopping malls in Meridian and Delta Township have worked to repurpose vacant retail operations. Meridian Mall has enjoyed considerable success in this area, most notably with the opening of entertainment-based operations High Caliber Karting and Launch Trampoline.

Meridian Township recently received an additional boost with the November announcement that home goods retailer, Wayfair will open a customer service center and bring 500 new jobs to the township in 2020. Chris Buck, economic development director, Meridian Township, says the Wayfair development further demonstrates how the region is diversifying its employer base.

"We've had the big three for the last hundred years, GM, state government and MSU," said Buck. "Now we have a very robust tech and financial institutions, we are a big five region in the country for the insurance industry. When you also consider McLaren Hospital, Glanbia's dairy processing plant in St. Johns, and the addition of Wayfair coming into the region, I'm hopeful this will make us more immune to future economic downturns."

Perhaps the groups most exciting project is the \$100 million reinvention of downtown Okemos, called Village of Okemos. The project calls for seven separate buildings covering 300,000 square feet in a two block area on Okemos and Hamilton Roads. The project by True North Development will produce new commercial and residential space, as well as a new headquarters for Douglas J Salon.

Buck says the ripple effect from the project will be significant.

"I suspect we are going to see to new projects come up on adjacent blocks from Mt. Hope to Grand River Avenue on Okemos and Marsh Roads," said Meridian's Chris Buck. "I think that whole area over the next ten years will have that enjoyable, walkable downtown experience that we really haven't had here before."

Delta Township is home to two major players in the insurance industry, both of which have expanded in the past decade. Auto-Owners has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in several expansions at its headquarters. Farm Bureau Insurance recently embarked on its own expansion effort. The Board of Water and Light recently broke ground on a \$500 million power plant on South Canal Street in Delta Township, which is the largest project the utility has ever undertaken. Web hosting company, Liquid Web has grown rapidly and made several expansions which underscores the region's growth in the technology sector. Meijer has invested heavily in its Creyts Road distribution center, which is the largest of its kind in North America. Delta Township Supervisor Ken Fletcher points to the continued reinvestment by General Motors as most significant

for the township and the region.

"The fact they are updating their lines and guaranteeing there will be new product for quite sometime is very exciting news," said Fletcher. "We've also seen considerable growth in auto suppliers who feed that plant, such as Magna who now employs more than a thousand people."

Eastwood Towne Center has enjoyed great success including several expansion projects in the past decade, radically changing the region's retail landscape from its Lansing Township location.

Smaller communities throughout the region have also experienced significant growth in the past decade. Many small towns have been able to develop their industrial parks. In addition to the Glanbia project in St. Johns, Charlotte has benefitted from expansion at Spartan Motors and Mason has experienced significant growth at Dart Container, especially after its billion-dollar acquisition of Solo Cup. In Williamston, Bekum America recently broke ground on a new facility at its U.S. headquarters.

WHAT WILL THE REGION LOOK LIKE IN 2030?

Trezise says LEAP is focused on growing the medical technology, insurance technology and agriculture technology industries over the next decade. He also sees a significant opportunity for Lansing to attract talent from other small towns around Michigan and the Midwest to fill the talent pipeline that will be expanded as a result of the continued growth.

"That will help us grow our population in a robust way to help us fill all the jobs that will be created," said Trezise.

Gillespie sees a couple catalysts for growth that need to be in place for the community to realize its full potential. First, the region needs to effectively market its strengths around quality of life, which means more talent will stay and more entrepreneurs will be willing to take risks. The second issue, according to Gillespie is for all local governments

to embrace an attitude of growth.

“If all our communities stressed the importance of dynamic growth being encouraged and welcomed—that sends the right message,” said Gillespie. “That equates to new jobs, new buildings and new housing. That builds a tax base that funds new roads, new police and fire services. That would take us a lot further than we are today.”

Gillespie Group owns the Sears property on Michigan Avenue at Frandor, which will be vacated sometime in the next few years. He says he would like to develop it to complement other projects, most notably the neighboring Red Cedar development. Everyone agrees those two projects are game-changers for the region.

“I think that will be spectacular,” said Stralkowski.

“Ten years from now I don’t think anybody is going to recognize that part of the city of Lansing.”

Delta Township’s Ken Fletcher says the entire region needs to place a major focus on building its infrastructure to support development.

“Every community is going to need to work to invest in infrastructure to make sure we are able to attract the businesses we need to have in the area,” said Fletcher.

Van Martin says continued emphasis on diversification of the economy is essential for the region, building on the foundation of what already is in place.

“We still have a reliance on the auto industry and we have to embrace that,” said Martin. “We have

to recognize who we are and play to our strengths. At the same time, you want to fill the gaps in an intelligent way that is going to add industries that can have a significant impact.”

Daman emphasizes the importance of business leadership to take the region to the next level. He also says the region needs to embrace a unified vision of its identity.

“We need to identify two or three very high priority regional issues that we can rally this business community behind,” said Daman. “That could be anything from developing a really strong talent attraction program or a riverfront re-development initiative. How are we going to leverage some of our key assets and set the stage for the next ten years and beyond for what the city of Lansing and the entire region can be?” ■

True North Development/West PAC Quiet Forces with Big Plans

Though not yet a household name on the local development scene, the team of True North Development and WestPac are in the midst of more than a quarter of a billion dollars in developments they expect will have a dramatic impact in Meridian Township, Okemos and downtown Lansing.

True North and WestPac are reshaping the northwest corner of the Okemos/Jolly area as part of a \$75 million project that includes 400 upscale apartments and a restaurant, pub and market planned for the current Value Tire location. Phase one of the apartment project, known as Elevation 1, was completed in 2018 and its 170 units are fully leased. Phase two is under construction and includes 117 apartments, a pool, hot tub and outdoor activities area. The Value Tire location redevelopment will begin early next year, with the restaurant opening planned for late 2020.

Another \$30 million in development is planned in phase three, north of the current apartments.

“Having control of the Value Tire corner and getting the same architectural look that we have in the other buildings will finish this area off nicely,” said Will Randle of Okemos-based True North. “We’re also getting rid of an industrial eyesore with the transformation of the old warehouse.”

Perhaps the group’s most exciting project is the \$100 million transformation of downtown



The \$100 million Villages of Okemos project will reinvent downtown Okemos.

Okemos. The Village of Okemos Project calls for seven separate buildings, which will cover 300,000 square feet in a two block area on Okemos and Hamilton Roads. Included in the plan are 205 apartments, 50,000 square feet of commercial space, with 13,000 square feet of that dedicated to a new location for Douglas J Salon, which is the anchor for the project.

“I believe it is one of the best undeveloped sites in the state of Michigan,” said Randle. “We’re also building an underground parking structure and a valet parking service for the entire area.”

The project will have its challenges, most notably \$20+ million in public infrastructure improvements that must be made in the aging area. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy performed a \$1 million clean-up at a former dry-cleaning site. The

development team has secured several incentives, including brownfield grants and loans from the state and tax increment financing from the local Downtown Development Authority.

The True North/WestPac team is also working on a new project in downtown Lansing, the 500 Block, including Lake Trust Credit Union, the building at the intersection of South Capitol Avenue and Lenawee Street. There will be a newly added building at the corner of South Capitol and Hillsdale Street. The old Lake Trust building will have 44 units for apartments and more than 23,000 square feet of retail and office space, while the new building will have 116 residential units and about 3,500 square feet of commercial space. Altogether, the 500 Block Project will result in more than \$31 million in private investment.

“The site is three blocks from the state Capitol building and there is lots of activity there,” said Jonathan Branoff, executive vice president of California-based WestPac and recent transplant from the Lansing region. “There is a significant shortage of housing downtown. Housing stabilizes the retail by bringing more people downtown 24/7. This project will help change the landscape.”

While the faces may be unfamiliar to many, the region is already seeing the impact of the True North and WestPac team’s work. ■

INVESTVets: Bridging the Military-Civilian Cultural Gap

A STUDY BY PRUDENTIAL SHOWED THAT TWO-THIRDS OF VETERANS have experienced difficulty transitioning to civilian life. Veterans name finding a job as the most significant challenge in transitioning, with transferring military skills to a civilian environment a major hurdle. INVESTVets aims to improve employment outcomes for those who have served in our nation's Armed Forces and their families in Michigan by eliminating cultural barriers and empowering veterans.

Established in 2015 as the employment pillar of the Lansing Area Veterans Coalition, INVESTVets has focused on the most significant barrier to veteran's employment—the military-civilian cultural gap.

“When veterans get out of the service and come back home to their communities, many things about their lives have completely changed,” said Michael Poyma, employment specialist, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. “Now, when they transition out into the civilian world, they are truly on our own, and that can be quite a challenge for a lot of veterans.”

INVESTVets helps bridge the cultural gap by teaching veterans' behaviors that are needed to successfully connect with those doing the hiring and subsequently allow them to be successful in the workplace. INVESTVets also helps hiring agents, many of whom have not served in the military, better understand veterans.



“We want them to understand some of the challenges veterans face,” said Poyma.

INVESTVets connects employers with veteran and military talent by offering activities that reduce the high expectations and stress that are common with traditional job fairs. The INVESTVets network is comprised of stakeholders from private and public agencies and organizations and includes more than 350 employers throughout Michigan.

“Many employers say, ‘this is the first time I’ve had a chance to sit down and talk with a vet,’” said Poyma.

Employers realize many benefits from hiring veterans who, as a result of their military experience, are well-trained, responsible, pay attention to detail, demonstrate reliability in showing up for work and on time, usually having excellent leadership skills and tend to stay with an employer. Much like their commitment to their military mission, veterans are also eager to be connected to a purpose in their civilian work life.

“Most veterans are looking for a new mission,” said Poyma. “They are quick learners and will hit the ground running.”

For more information on INVESTVets, email info@investvets.org.

MSUFCU Welcomes Dan Wilkinson

We are pleased to announce Dan Wilkinson as our newest business loan officer.

Dan brings with him a wealth of business lending knowledge and a strong desire to continue helping promote growth of the mid-Michigan area.

Dan has been serving the Greater Lansing business community for over 12 years, is president of the Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club, and also serves as a member of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Ambassador team.

Whether you are just getting your business off the ground, or have been established for years, Dan can help your business grow to the next level.

Dan Wilkinson
517-333-2424, ext. 6653 | dan.wilkinson@msufcu.org



2020 ATHENA PowerLink Recipient Ready To Begin Work with Expert Advisory Panel

LAUREN PALMER, FOUNDER AND OWNER OF CURVACEOUS LINGERIE this month begins her year-long journey as the 2020 ATHENA PowerLink (APC) recipient. A panel of expert advisors has been specially selected to mentor Palmer over the next 12 months as she seeks to strengthen her personal business acumen and elevate her business.

“I look forward to working with the advisory panel to take our business to the next level and help navigate the challenges and opportunities that come with managing growth as a small business owner,” said Palmer.

APL is a national business mentoring program connecting women-owned businesses with a skilled advisory panel that provides strategic consultation services for one year. The consulting services are valued at more than \$25,000. Palmer’s impressive advisory panel includes:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Tom Hamp | AdviCoach of Mid-Michigan |
| Adil Daudi | Daudi & Kroll P.C. |
| Jane Mitchell | Jungle Jane Promotions |
| Paul Rathbun | Rathbun Insurance Agency |
| David McNeilly | Northwestern Mutual |
| Lisa Smith | Inverve Marketing, Inc. |
| Jodi Schafer | Human Resource Management Services |
| Amy Richter-Perkins | Martin Commercial |
| Matt Johnson | On Target Living |
| Julie Pfeifle | Andrews Hooper & Pavlik |

“Creating the best Advisory Panel possible for the award winner is the core of why the ATHENA PowerLink Award has been successful here with the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Lansing area,” said Tom Hamp, APL panel coordinator.

Curvaceous Lingerie opened its doors in 2012 after Palmer became frustrated with the lingerie selection in the Lansing area. Having worked in the bridal



industry most of her career, requests and suggestions would come often regarding foundations and lingerie ideas. After continuously sending people more than an hour away to find something that fit their needs, Palmer decided it was time to open her business. In 2014, Curvaceous Lingerie had generated enough business to move into its location in Old Town Lansing. ■

ATHENA POWERLINK APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

The Lansing Regional Chamber has also announced that applications are now being accepted for the ATHENA PowerLink program. Applications can be accessed now at www.lansingchamber.org.

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Congratulations were in order for Matt Resch and his team at **Resch Strategies** as they celebrated their new office space with a Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) ribbon cutting on Thursday, Nov. 21. Their office is located at 300 S. Washington Square #415, Lansing, and is part of the historic Knapp's Centre building. The public relations and public affairs firm is now blocks from the state capitol. Joining company owner Matt Resch (center, with scissors) to cut the ribbon is (from left to right): Laura Biehl, Nikki O'Meara, City of Lansing Mayor Andy Schor, Joe Becsey and Stephanie Van Koevering.



The LRCC was pleased to be on hand for the ribbon cutting celebration for **Clark Schaefer Hackett (CSH)** on Tuesday, Nov. 19. It is the first Michigan office for CSH, who recently acquired Greater Lansing accounting firms, Warmels & Comstock and Layton & Richardson. Their new office, located at 3505 Coolidge Road, East Lansing, is pleased to house 50 associates who are focused on bettering the lives of their clients, people and communities.



Thursday, Nov. 14 was an exciting day for Dr. Manish Bondale and his team at **Ascend Physical Therapy and Rehab**. The Chamber was pleased to host a ribbon-cutting celebration for their new office, located at 1331 E. Grand River Ave, Suite 203, East Lansing. Dr. Bondale owns several other locations in central Michigan, but this is the first Greater Lansing office for Ascend. This team prides itself on providing a patient-first approach and incorporating therapeutic activities, physical modalities and exercises along with education to get their patients moving again.



Based in East Lansing, **Advance Medical Massage** provides professional and affordable therapeutic massage services to consumers with busy lifestyles at convenient times. Founded in 2009, Advance Medical Massage offers many styles of massage techniques, but never limits the possibly to learn more. Some of those techniques include Medical Massage, Trigger Point Therapy, Swedish Massage, Reflexology, Deep Tissue Massage, Sports Massage, Prenatal Massage, Migraine Release, Rain Drop Therapy and Hot Stone Massage. In 2019, Advance Medical Massage was growing, so they underwent construction and added on 1,000 square feet to their original office space. In doing this, they added three new treatment rooms; a Reflexology room and two large massage rooms, which can be set up for couple massages.



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Mayor Schor, Downtown Lansing Inc., LRCC, and the **Reputation Beverage Co.** team gathered to cut the red ribbon and officially welcome the new company, Reputation Beverage to Lansing on Wednesday, Nov. 13. Formerly the Crafted Bean, Reputation now has locations in DeWitt and on Michigan Avenue in Lansing, and serves an extensive lineup of exclusive, handcrafted, coffee cocktails that you won't find anywhere else. They create one-of-a-kind coffee drinks, including home-crafted kombucha and tea. Make sure to stop in and check them out, not only for beverages to enjoy the many fun events they host throughout the year.



The LRCC, community residents and the VanPoppelen team gathered to celebrate the re-opening of the Grand River/Waverly Airport **McDonald's** location on Tuesday, Nov. 5. The lobby was fully remodeled with touch-screen kiosks and many new improvements. Everyone cut the red ribbon together to thank them for the beautification and enhancements. Lansing is fortunate to have local owner-operators that are forward-thinking and invest in the community, strong supporters for the Ronald McDonald House of Mid-Michigan and create innovative ideas to help increase convenience.



It was a beautiful morning in Old Town as folks from the Downtown Lansing Inc., Old Town Commercial Association, Mayor Schor, City of Lansing, LRCC, and the creative and fun staff at **Blue Owl Coffee** gathered for a ribbon-cutting to celebrate the Grand Opening of their new location at 1236 Turner Road, Lansing on Monday, Nov. 4. Blue Owl Coffee is not only known for their specialty drinks, but they now offer lunch items and focus on community supporting the local arts, in an intimate craft venue. The company aimed for a "pub feel" with the new venture maintaining the Old Town vibe.



The LRCC is pleased to celebrate the grand opening of **Michigan Psychiatric & Primary Care Clinic** in East Lansing. The Meridian Area Business Association, LRCC, Meridian Township and many community residents gathered to cut the red ribbon. MPPCC promotes the well-being of the individuals and families in the Greater Lansing area community and throughout Michigan by providing accessible, quality, mental health and primary care for children, adults and their families. Their vision is to work alongside you thriving to build a healthier, happier, brighter and better life for you and your family.

Our big scissors have been busy welcoming new businesses to the Lansing region, recognizing momentous milestones and celebrating growth and expansions! Having the Chamber host a ribbon cutting for your company is a great opportunity to build public awareness about your business and the growth or changes that you are experiencing. The Chamber's ribbon-cutting and groundbreaking services should be an important part of your overall marketing and advertising plan. We provide the camera, red ribbon, and of course, the big scissors!

For more information about ribbon-cutting services, please contact the Chamber at info@lansingchamber.org or (517) 487-6340.



On Monday, Nov. 18, the LRCC welcomed Title Boxing Club East Lansing to their first Mid-Michigan location at 2843 E. Grand River, Suite 100, East Lansing. Title Boxing Club East Lansing is a premium fitness studio with boxing and kickboxing classes that bring the heat and call to the inner warrior in us all.

PEOPLE NEWS



Stephenson

On Thursday, Nov. 14, East Lansing attorney **Michael Stephenson** was given the Ingham County Bar Association's *Leo A. Farhat Outstanding Attorney Award* named after legendary Lansing-area attorney Leo A. Farhat. Stephenson is a partner at **Willingham Coté, P.C.** and specializes in medical malpractice defense.



Becher

Sparrow Carson Hospital is proud to recognize **Jennifer Becher** from Sparrow Medical Group (SMG) Pediatrics as the October *Caregiver of the Month*. Becher is the provider practice support caregiver at SMG Pediatrics and received a nomination for the compassion she shows to patients and her willingness to go above and beyond to make sure patients' needs are met.



Three **Capital Area Michigan Works!** team members and volunteers were honored by the Michigan Works! Association at its annual conference in Kalamazoo. Capital Area Michigan Works! business services

team leader, **Teri Sand** was awarded Michigan's *Shining Star Award* for her above-and-beyond efforts to support employers in Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties. Workforce development board member, **Rey Guzman** was named the 2019 Collaborator of the Year for his role as talent development liaison. Workforce development board member and Teach. Talent. Thrive. co-chair, **Chris Holman** was recognized as the 2019 Volunteer of the Year for his years of service and leadership.



Purdy

The **Greater Michigan Construction Academy** welcomes new staff member **Carly Purdy** to the role of admissions and placement services director. Carly will be working out of the Midland area office and is looking forward to collaborating with their training partners as well as their students as they continue their education in the trades.



Smeak

Junior Achievement (JA) of Mid Michigan welcomes **Jessica Smeak** of Smeak Real Estate to the board of directors. Jessica has been a volunteer with JA for over five years and, as an entrepreneur herself, is committed to building business within the mid-Michigan area by inspiring youth to pursue their own path to entrepreneurship.

Jane Mitchell, MAS, owner of **Jungle Jane Promotions** was recognized by Michigan Promotional Professionals Association for her dedication, leadership and devotion to the promotional products industry with the Presidential Leadership Award. Her dedication to this over 23 billion dollar industry was culminated by many successful trade shows, political

lobbying both state and federal levels, mentorship and community service.

From gamified science learning to empowering youth athletes, entrepreneurs of all kinds joined the **Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)** and the greater Lansing community on Nov. 20 for the Hatching business pitch competition. The November winner was Cytopolis by **Johan De Bruin**, an online strategy game that teaches microbiology in a shared ecosystem, using economic concepts to trade resources between players — think Clash of Clans with an educational twist.

The **Arts Council of Greater Lansing** is pleased to announce its 2019 *Applause Award* winners. This year, seven awards were presented to the following recipients: Creative Community Award, **Greater Lansing Association of Realtors**; Business Leadership Award, **Lansing Board of Water and Light**; Arts and Cultural Organization Award, Lansing Symphony Orchestra; Arts Educator Award, **Dionne O'Dell**; Individual Artist Award, **John Dale Smith**; Civic Leadership Award, **Mayor Andy Schor** and the Ted Sondag Individual Leadership Award, **April Clobes**.

Downtown Lansing, Inc welcomes **Siso Dhladhia** as a marketing and design specialist. Siso is a downtown resident with a plethora of experience in the small business and entrepreneurial world. Previously serving as the organizer and emcee of The Hatching, an entrepreneurial pitch competition, Siso worked for LEAP as well as Impression 5 Science Center through the last few years. You may also have seen him around town helping to organize and promote the 'Below the Stacks' mural week-long festival held throughout the Lansing area. Siso feels that no one loves his downtown "street" as much as he does and he looks forward to promoting all

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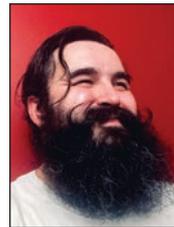
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the reasons why people should share the downtown Lansing love!



The men of Sparrow helped to change the face of male health by participating in the hospital's inaugural Who-Grew-It-Best contest, designed to bring attention to November. More than 1,600



Vsetula



Clobes



Harden

Caregivers cast ballots for 37 of their colleagues who entered in two categories, Old Growth (for existing facial hair) and New Growth (for whiskers grown during November's Men's Health Awareness Month). The hairy winners were **Samuel Vsetula**, an X-ray technician in the radiology department, for his impressive existing beard, and the men of the neurology intensive care unit for their "fabulous beards."

McLaren Greater Lansing welcomes **April Clobes**, president and CEO of Michigan State University Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) and **Ed Harden**, president of Capitol National Bank, after their recent appointment to the hospital's Board of Trustees. Clobes has been the president and CEO of MSUFCU since March 2015. Harden brings a wealth of knowledge of health care to the McLaren Greater Lansing Board of Trustees. Harden began his career with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and held senior sales management positions with Priority Health Plan in Grand Rapids and Physicians Health Plan in Lansing before serving as vice president

at McLaren Health Plan in Flint. Harden joined Capitol National Bank in 2014.

Sparrow is pleased to announce that **Theresa Gracik** will be leading their Sparrow/Michigan Medicine Pediatric Joint Venture as the pediatric service line director. Theresa comes to Sparrow from Michigan Medicine, bringing with her 15 years of leadership in several different capacities. Her most recent role was the director of clinical operations for the cardiovascular center.

Dewpoint, a leading provider of technology consulting and implementation solutions, is pleased to welcome several new professionals to Lansing: **Robert Orwat**, account executive; **David Lacy II**, desktop administrator and **Chris Sutton**, desktop administrator.



Kroll

The **Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau (GLCVB)** is pleased to announce it has hired **Hannah Kroll, CTA** as sales manager for the organization. Kroll comes to the GLCVB from the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, where she performed three different increasingly demanding roles over the last eight years.



Flory

Michael Flory has been elected as the 2020 President of the Home Builders Association of Michigan. Flory is a member of the **Home Builders Association of Greater Lansing**.



Seger

LAFCU has announced that **Amanda Seger** has been promoted to accounting manager. She will oversee the accounting department, assist in development of new products and services and be involved in ongoing analysis to improve processes and efficiency.

COMPANY NEWS

Delta Township has earned a Silver Certification in the Michigan Green Communities Challenge (MGC). The MGC Challenge is an annual program that serves as a guide to help communities measure their progress towards sustainability.



KUNZ, LEIGH AND ASSOCIATES

Kunz, Leigh & Associates has been named a Top Workplace by the Detroit Free Press for the second year in a row. Awardees are selected based solely on employee feedback gathered

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through a survey administered by a reputable, third-party research firm.

The Davies Project is grateful to Jackson National Life Insurance Company (Jackson®) for its ongoing support of health for children and hope for families. The grants from Jackson® have helped enable thousands of rides for hundreds of children and families. Thank you for driving change in our community!

32nd Consecutive QUILT-A-THON
 East Lansing - Fri Jan 3 & Sat Jan 4, 10am - 5pm
 Jackson - Fri Jan 3 & Sat Jan 4, 10am - 5pm

We need your help to make quilts to donate to local charities. Last year we made over 155 twin size quilts and donated them to EVE, Loaves and Fishes and John George Home.

We need YOU! and your friends and family. We will be finishing quilts, so we have a spot for everyone - no special skills needed.

- There will be a potluck salad lunch with everyone bringing a dish to pass each day.
- No charge.
- Help to provide needy people with quilts and have fun with everyone involved!

**** Please call to sign up so we know how many people to plan on! ****

*** Also, please donate fabric and batting anytime. We need 100% cotton fabric 2 1/2" strips or larger and polyester batting, crib size or larger. Donations are welcome all year. We appreciate your continued support!***

Country Stitches of East Lansing hosted the 31st annual charity Quilt-A-Thon from Friday, Jan. 3, and Saturday, Jan. 4 at Country Stitches, located at 2200 Coolidge Road. Area volunteers finished quilts from quilting materials donated by local quilters and Country Stitches for EVE, Loaves & Fishes and Gateway Community Center.

Employees from MSU Federal Credit Union were in the community sharing gift cards for free coffee, lunch, gas, or tickets to a movie theater during the week of

Nov. 11-15 as part of a Pay It Forward initiative. This annual event coincides each year with the Credit Union's anniversary on Nov. 15 — fulfilling one of the Credit Union's values: giving back to the community. This year, employees distributed \$8,200 on behalf of the Credit Union, corresponding with its 82nd anniversary.

Sparrow Hospital has earned a top ranking for use of technology in improving Patient care from the Ann Arbor-based College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME). Sparrow has received 2019 CHIME HealthCare's Most Wired recognition as a certified level 7. The Most Wired program conducts an annual survey to assess how effectively healthcare organizations apply core and advanced technologies into their clinical and business programs to improve health and care in their communities.

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 h a s released Lifa Academy, an exciting user-friendly online education and training platform for health care administrators, social workers, and agency staff specifically for the Ryan White Program community. The platform currently focuses on CAREWare 6

training, with more online education planned for future releases.

Origami Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center received the highest possible level of accreditation (3 years) through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) during their survey this fall. The successful survey results demonstrate Origami's commitment to its mission of creating opportunities and transforming lives.

Sparrow Medical Group (SMG) Carson Walk-In Clinic has expanded its hours to six days a week to meet the needs of the Carson City area. The SMG Carson Walk-In Clinic is now open Monday through Friday from noon to 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon.

Lung cancer causes the most cancer deaths worldwide, accounting for 1.8 million new cases and 1.6 million deaths annually. In 1987, lung cancer surpassed breast cancer to become the leading cause of cancer deaths in women, according to the American Lung Association. Quitting smoking isn't easy. However, McLaren Greater Lansing now offers a class that may help. The American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking class is now offered at the Lansing-area hospital and can help community members who are looking for help quitting smoking. ■



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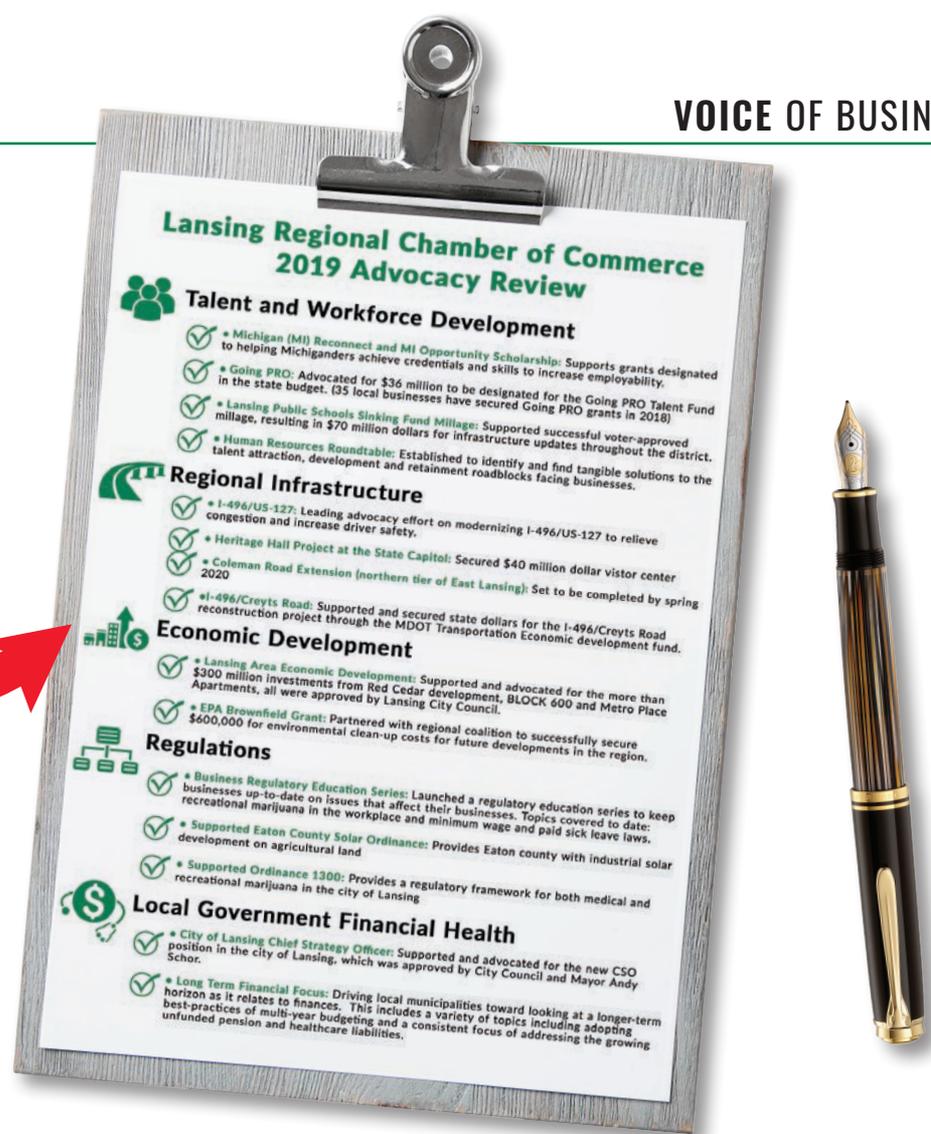
2019 Advocacy Review

THE CHAMBER SERVES AS THE VOICE OF BUSINESS for the Lansing region. Our advocacy team is focused on leading efforts to strengthen the business environment in our region and enhance our community while keeping you connected and advocating on your behalf. By building and strengthening key relationships with local, state and federal policymakers who are making decisions that impact your business, we are the trusted voice of your business. Our 2019 advocacy priorities focused on the following areas: Talent and workforce development, regional infrastructure, economic development, regulatory environment and local government financial health.

Key positive outcomes from 2019

Together as business leaders, we can continue to influence policy decisions by leading and executing efforts that focus on our member's guiding principles and our shared vision to make the Lansing region a better place to live, work and thrive. As we continue to build on our success from 2019, we will relentlessly work on your behalf in 2020.

Questions can be directed to Steve Japinga at sjapinga@lansingchamber.org.



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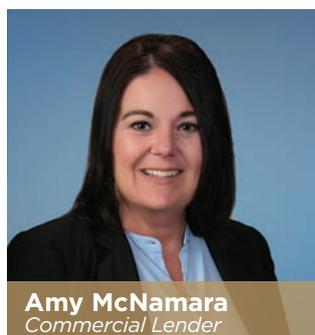


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