

FOCUS

THE MONTHLY BUSINESS NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE • MAY 2021

State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report *The Next Step Forward*

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CAPITAL REGION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SELECTS NEW CEO





TIM DAMAN
President and CEO
Lansing Regional
Chamber of Commerce



BOB TRESIZE
President and CEO
Lansing Economic Area
Partnership



State of the Region: Establishing a Vision for Greater Lansing's Future

As we enter a new decade, the Lansing region, encompassing Ingham, Eaton, Clinton, and Shiawassee counties, is experiencing historic levels of economic growth. There are \$3.2 billion in current new investments, with hundreds of millions more and thousands of jobs expected. These projects are as diverse as our region's economy ranging from one of the world's leading particle accelerator facilities to a new hospital to mixed-used buildings, insurance headquarter expansions, manufacturing investment, and agricultural processing facilities.

We have successfully positioned our region on the national and global stage, competing for and attracting significant foreign investment and Fortune 500 companies. As our population grows, so does our region's visibility as an attractive location for business and talent. The Lansing region's unique assets are competitive with areas such as Columbus, Greenville, Des Moines, Madison, Nashville, and Ann Arbor. These assets are being harnessed and enhanced to help develop a more vibrant and prosperous future.

Our collective future is bright in a highly competitive global economy. However, we must accelerate our efforts to compete for future jobs and investments successfully. One of the first steps to achieve this goal was to benchmark our region against 11 thriving communities and identify our competitive strengths, opportunities for growth, and a regional vision.

We currently do not compare favorably on many measures, which we should view as opportunities. The State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report will actively guide us toward important goals and strategies that will lead to continued growth. It will not be easy, but we must accept this challenge with confidence!

The new and revealing data provided by this study will allow us to learn, analyze, and measure the regional economy, people, and places. It will also enable us to continuously improve our

partnerships and competitive efforts to secure a more prosperous, innovative, diverse, and exciting future for the Lansing region.

Among 42 economic indicators, four areas stand out for short-term focus – population growth, educational attainment, private sector growth and affordability. Our steering committee will immediately begin to identify strategies and tactics to move the region forward in these areas.



Our collective future is bright in a highly competitive global economy. However, we must accelerate our efforts to compete for future jobs and investments successfully. One of the first steps to achieve this goal was to benchmark our region against 11 thriving communities and identify our competitive strengths, opportunities for growth, and a regional vision.

The State of the Lansing Region project would not be possible without the backing of our partners who believe in this initiative and are committing time and resources towards its successful implementation going forward. Those partners include: Dean Transportation, Dewpoint, Forsberg Real Estate Company, Harvest Creative Services, Lansing Community College, Maner

Costerisan, Michigan State University, MSU Federal Credit Union, Shyft Group and TechSmith.

As we launched our first State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report, we did not anticipate a global pandemic and the resulting disruption is not reflected in this report's data. However, we acknowledge the changes and challenges now posed by the COVID-19 crisis. At first, we had to understand the magnitude of the crisis related to the health and safety of our families, neighbors, employees, colleagues, and community. Stay-at-home orders resulted in many teams working remotely, and business operations were curtailed or closed. We understand the stress that our regional economy is currently under because of COVID-19.

Navigating an unknown landscape and unexpected disruption to our daily lives has created a unique set of circumstances that challenges us all. It is so important for business leadership to establish a vision and work together to emerge from this crisis stronger than ever.

We are up to this challenge and invite you to join us! ■



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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JUNE 10

— DATE —

5:30-7PM

— TIME —

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NO. 2021

LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Annual Dinner

AT JACKSON FIELD

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) hosts numerous virtual events monthly, from Member Mixers to Lansing Economic Club programs. The digital events and programming provide valuable content and information and give members unique opportunities to connect and network. The LRCC also continues to host virtual weekly roundtables for business, community, and government leaders to provide updates and share what is going on in their community.

The LRCC encourages members to check their email, follow LRCC social media channels, and visit the LRCC website for the most updated information on additional educational offerings and networking opportunities as we move forward.

Registration is available on the LRCC website.

LANSING ECONOMIC CLUB: VOICES OF SMALL BUSINESS

Date: Thursday, May 6 from 11 a.m. to noon

Location: Virtual

Description: Sponsored by Consumer's Energy, the May Lansing Economic Club will feature a panel of small business owners will shine a much-needed light on the daily struggles the Greater Lansing business community has faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Panelists include Trista Parisian and Jenny Quinn, co-founders of FLEXcity Fitness; Desmond Ferguson, founder and CEO of Moneyball Sportswear; Kirby Preuss, store manager of Preuss Pets and Matthew Gillet, co-owner of Saddleback BBQ. The event will be moderated by Ann Emmerich, anchor and reporter at WILX-TV.

MAY MEMBER MIXER

Date: Tuesday, May 11 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Location: Cottage Gardens; 2611 S. Waverly Hwy.; Lansing, MI 48911

Description: Hosted by Cottage Gardens, the in-person Member Mixer will allow attendees to meet and enhance their business and community relationships. Cottage Gardens has been in business for more than 100 years, and they look forward to welcoming LRCC members and guests.

LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER ANNUAL DINNER

Date: Thursday, June 10 from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Location: Jackson Field; 505 E. Michigan Ave.; Lansing, MI 48912

Description: The region's premier business celebration and networking event will feature a strolling dinner, drinks, and good conversation. It will celebrate the Community Service, Outstanding Small Business, and Legacy Award recipients, and the previous year's 10 Over the Next Ten, Celebration of Regional Growth, ATHENA and ATHENAPowerLink recipients, and LRCC Ambassadors. The LRCC will continue to review and adhere to current CDC COVID-19 guidelines as we move forward and will modify plans, as needed.

VIRTUAL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES

Virtual roundtables allow community and government leaders an opportunity to share what is going on in the community and determine ways to advise the tri-county region.

- **Delta Township - Eaton County:** Wednesday, May 5 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- **Lansing - Delhi Township:** Wednesday, May 12 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- **East Lansing - Meridian Township:** Wednesday, May 19 from 9 to 10 a.m.

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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

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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.

CHAMBER MILESTONES

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

The Peanut Shop

45 Years

Boling Janitorial Service, Inc.

35 Years

Louis Padnos I & M Co.

30 Years

Krimson, LLC

20 Years

Rehmann

20 Years

Candlewood Suites Lansing

15 Years

Castle Pointe Apartments - Monarch Investment

15 Years

MarxModa

15 Years

Lake Lansing Road Mobil Service, Inc.

10 Years

St. Vincent Catholic Charities

10 Years

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5 Years

Tandem Studios

5 Years



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Lansing Area Business Honored as 2021 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch

Even Lansing area businesses have been honored with the prestigious 2021 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch Award, presented by Michigan Celebrates Small Business. The companies will be honored at an awards ceremony on July 20.

Congratulations to these outstanding small businesses:

F.D. Hayes Electric Company is one of Michigan's leading electrical contractors. They are a construction and facility services business, providing electrical and telecommunication design and construction services throughout Michigan. They provide electrical and telecommunications design and construction services to commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities throughout Michigan. Their client list includes some of Michigan's leading insurance companies, hospitals, schools, colleges and universities, commercial office buildings, manufacturing facilities, and retail centers. Founded in Lansing, Mich. in 1923 by inventor and entrepreneur Frank D. Hayes, F.D. Hayes Electric Company is now in its fourth generation as a family business.



Orthopaedic Rehab Specialists Physical Therapy has been locally-operated and privately-owned by physical therapists since 1987. They provide rehabilitation, injury care and prevention, and education to empower people in our communities to live a healthy, active life. As a community-based, privately-owned physical therapy provider, they have invested in their communities. With multiple physical therapy clinic locations stretching from Greater Lansing to Jonesville and Jackson to Ann Arbor, their goal is to be conveniently located near where you work, play, and live, making it easier to access the care you need.



TGG Solutions thrives on innovating enterprise solutions for small businesses powered by their dedicated associates, strongly rooted family values, and over 50 years of solution-finding in the insurance industry. Listening with an ear of discovery to discern and anticipate needs, they love to craft uniquely patterned business-expanding solutions for their customers across all sectors. In a world where automation is king, their high-touch personal customer service model sets them apart. They believe excellent customer interactions are built on cutting-edge technology clothed in human warmth. This dynamic combination fuels every one of their solutions.

The Botanical Company (Carbidex)

has a genuine love for providing its customers with some of the best cannabis products available. They have the knowledge to back it up. They are dedicated to being a consistent resource to their customers. They believe you can empower yourself to better understand the cannabis plant, your cannabinoid system, and how it works together through the right education. They want their customers to think of them as a part of their expert team, one that is here to help customers navigate the benefits of cannabis and develop a regimen that works best for them.



Elderly Instruments

remains a family business after 50 years. When you visit their Lansing showroom, they want you to feel like you are walking into a living room. They still offer great new, used, and vintage instruments, as well as accessories, instructional materials, and even a few wacky things, all at great prices. They offer free advice, or they can write an appraisal that your insurance company will gladly accept. The shop is also widely known for its professional restorations on any age acoustic or electric guitar, bass, banjo, mandolin, ukulele, and more.



Peak Performance Physical Therapy

uses an advanced integrated approach to minimize or eliminate pain and work with you to restore your mobility, strength, flexibility and balance. They know the difficulties that come with minimal function and mobility, so they aim to get their patients back to the things they enjoy in life. From daily movement to activities, work and recreation, they will help you reach your peak! Their physical therapists work with patients to focus, educate, and develop customized treatment programs and plans that allow their patients to take charge of their health.



Anna's House has been family-owned and operated in since 2002 and recently opened a new location

at 1753 W. Grand River Ave. in Okemos. They are dedicated to providing fresh, local, quality ingredients in their dishes, while offering an extensive menu to meet various dietary lifestyles, such as gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian and vegan. At each location, their goal is for guests to feel at home and comfortable, while making meaningful life connections in a clean, bright and friendly atmosphere. Anna's House strives to have every guest leave satisfied, relaxed, full, content, happy and refreshed. ■




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Covid Pandemic Presents Small Businesses the Opportunity to Shine

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) Voice of Small Business campaign continues to recognize the tremendous ability of our region's small businesses to overcome the many obstacles created by the Covid-19 pandemic. Each month, LRCC has recognized several small businesses that have stood out through the campaign themes of resiliency, teamwork, community, innovation, safety, and opportunity.

This month, we feature five organizations that have used the face of the Covid pandemic to create new opportunities: **SuperWebPros, Rivers of Life Church, Venturit, Ele's Place, and Able Eyes.**

SuperWebPros

Jesse Flores is confident his firm SuperWebPros will emerge from the pandemic much stronger, because he has used this past year to strengthen the company's systems.

"The pandemic has allowed us to get out of the 'putting out fires' mode and into the 'think about what type of business we want to have' mode," said Flores. "Over the past several months we have spent quite a bit of time on our systems, both on the revenue side and the cost side of our business."



Flores

One of the investments his firm has made in the past several months has been in what he calls the Super Support Hub, which allows them to get more work done, faster with better quality and more control than they have ever had.

"It has given us more transparency and collaboration with our customers," said Flores. "By improving our systems, we can do more work with fewer resources."

Flores says one of the main things they have done is to right-size their service offerings on the revenue side. They came up with an Unlimited Web Design plan.

"Instead of customers having to spend thousands of dollars on static websites that are essentially going to be obsolete in 18 months, they can for hundreds of dollars per month get access to a website that is the right size for their business now and grow as needed based on the services they need and based on the technology requirements that they have."

SuperWebPros has built its reputation on a new approach that delivers a fast, flexible, reliable, and scalable product. They have also created a reputation for strong, responsive customer service. For more information about SuperWebPros, visit www.superwebpros.com.

Rivers of Life Church

Rivers of Life Church is a body of believers who love the Lord and are committed to spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. The widespread suffering and the immense challenges of the COVID pandemic presented Rivers of Life an opportunity to more fully live out their mission of reaching, restoring, and refreshing people.

"What we wanted to do was to let the community know that we love them, and we wanted to give back to them," said Rivers of Life Pastor Jesse Brown, who recently

Through their social mission, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Care Network of Michigan (Blue Cross) works to increase access to affordable care, enhance the quality of care and improve the overall health of Michigan citizens and their communities. Blue Cross has generously underwritten the LRCC Voice of Small Business campaign.



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield
Blue Care Network
of Michigan**

Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



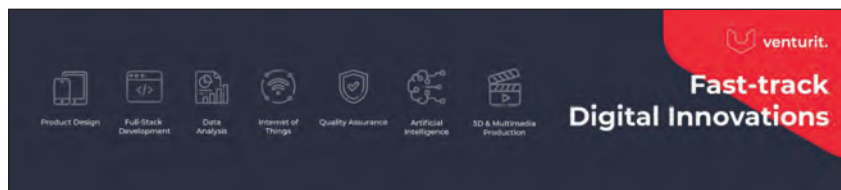
passed away. His wife, Brigitte Brown has assumed the role of lead pastor.

"The three things that hit our church during Covid were unemployment, lack of food and child care," said Priscilla Bordayo, events director at Rivers of Life. "We felt we could tackle two of the three things."

Rivers of Life started giving out free food which people could either pick up or have delivered to their doorstep. As the plan was being strategically implemented, more and more people wanted to offer their assistance. Several local businesses donated food for weekly lunches, some personally catered food in, while others contributed financially to the daily operational needs of the childcare.

From the onset of the childcare, one thing that was very important to the team was that this childcare would not just be a place where kids spent their day playing games and watching TV, but rather, it would consist of structured days of learning. The kids were taught the subjects of reading, writing, math, and science by certified teachers and those with degrees in education.

Services provided by Rivers of Life Church are available, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., with an after-school program from 3 to 6 p.m. For more information, contact Priscilla Bordayo, event director, at PriscillaBordayo.com or (469) 658-2724.



Venturit

For more than a decade, Venturit has specialized in producing smart applications using AI, Machine Learning, blockchain, and IoT. Venturit fast-tracks innovations and digital transformations for companies of all sizes, from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies. It uses proven cutting-edge technologies and best practices to deliver exceptional experiences to the health, agriculture, education, finance, and automotive industries. Headquartered in East Lansing and with offices in four countries outside the U.S., Venturit currently has 60 employees.

For the technical team at Venturit, the Covid pandemic was not as big an adjustment because most team members can work remotely. On the business's sales side, the company had to make several revisions to its sales goals and strategies.

"Like most companies, we were doing traditional sales outreach; trade shows, networking events and expos," said Daniel Herzog, Venturit's director of business development. "After March, our sales calendar was wiped clean, so we had to find other avenues for business opportunities."

Venturit developed a plan to get more online content. They became much more robust on social media, including putting much more information on LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook. They also produced video content, a webinar, and a podcast.

"We were doing anything and everything we could to get our name out there," said Herzog. "As they say, adversity drives innovation, and innovation can lead to opportunity."

Venturit found an opportunity in the space of online education. The company had already been working in that area for more than six years. Venturit partnered locally with Michigan Virtual and has three current projects with Michigan State University.

"We see that as continuing to grow and flourish going forward," said Herzog.

Venturit has reached out to community colleges, private colleges, and universities to develop online education platforms further. For more information about Venturit, visit www.venturit.com.

Ele's Place – Capital Region

Ele's Place – Capital Region serves grieving children, teens, young adults, and their families from throughout Mid-Michigan. The Covid pandemic changed much of life as we know it. However, it did not cancel grief. Dealing with the reality of the Covid pandemic meant shifting services from face-to-face to where the families were.



"Families who are grieving during Covid face many additional obstacles," said Kristine Kuhnert, director, Ele's Place. "Many cannot go to hospitals to see their loved ones and say their final goodbyes. Families cannot hold a funeral, memorial, celebration of life in a way they would like too."

Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic has meant there are new and additional layers to the grief families are experiencing. Children and teens are not able to connect in person with their friends for support.

"Grief is isolating, and we are living in times that are already isolating by nature," said Kuhnert. "Now, more than ever, our families need Ele's Place. We must address childhood grief. Unresolved grief can lead to suicidal ideations, using drugs or alcohol to numb pain, trouble sleeping, truancy, and isolation."

Initially, during the pandemic, Ele's Place provided weekly family activities and check-ins and added virtual groups.

"We had to recreate an almost 30-year program from an in-person format to a virtual format," said Kuhnert. "This has involved learning technology, revising materials and training over 60 volunteer facilitators."

Participating from home has provided more accessibility to Ele's Place services and provided children and teens the ability to share more about themselves and special things that connect them.

Ele's Place is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2021. In the past three decades, Ele's Place has served over 31,000 individuals in the region. During the past year, Ele's Place has averaged almost a call per day for services. For information about Ele's Place and to donate, visit elesplace.org/about-us/capital-region.

Able Eyes

The mission of Able Eyes is to provide visual, state-of-the-art experiences/teaching tools to children and adults with disabilities. Able Eyes, which is a Lansing-based organization, provides virtual walk-thru tours of the inside of public spaces such as parks, museums, hotels, restaurants, retail businesses, and more for accessibility (helping people) and marketing (helping businesses). Virtual tours allow customers of all abilities an opportunity to explore beforehand to decrease anxiety, but more importantly, is a tool used by persons with disabilities to explore accessibility beforehand, making new experiences more comfortable and easily navigated.



Winters

"When I saw virtual tours for the first time, I thought, 'this is the thing that could really change lives for people,'" said Meegan Winters, CEO/co-founder, Able Eyes and a former special education teacher. "Teachers and families that have loved ones with disabilities can now explore places ahead of time and make decisions based on what they see."

The Covid pandemic has created a situation where everyone of all abilities are nervous going to new places, so the virtual tours are not only helping those people, it is also helping businesses that are struggling.

"It is a virtual means of marketing and allows people to see and explore a space," said Winters. "They are something that can be featured on a website or social media, and we have them on our website as well."

Able Eyes hopes that their service will help struggling businesses coming out of the pandemic by giving them a unique tool to bring customers back in.

"Now what we offer is more than an accessibility tool," said Winters. "It is a universal design."

Able Eyes also offers How to Video Modeling, which uses visual/video examples of someone performing a targeted behavior or skill and then imitating the behavior/skill watched. For more information about Able Eyes, visit www.ableeyes.org. ■

On the Frontlines in the Battle Against Kidney Disease

The data on kidney disease is startling. One in three Americans are at-risk for kidney disease, with 37 million people already suffering from chronic kidney disease. Six hundred sixty thousand live with kidney failure, while 100,000 people await a kidney transplant.

Those are pretty scary statistics. For Marcy Rzepka, it is much more than numbers. Diagnosed in 2015 with kidney disease, Marcy is fighting not only for her health, but also to help others who find themselves trying to cope with the overwhelming challenges of managing a life-threatening illness.



Rzepka

Rzepka, who works as a member relations manager for the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, initially did not pay too much attention to her diagnosis because of other pressing challenges in her life at the time. But after months of feeling chronically tired, she connected with a nephrologist, first in Iowa, and then in 2016 with Dr. Edin Basic with McLaren Nephrology.

"He became an integral part of my team," said Rzepka. "I can't stress to people enough how important it is that you become your own advocate, stay involved, and don't be afraid to ask questions and give some pushback."

Marcy is now at stage 4, with 28 percent kidney function. Michigan law requires candidates for kidney transplants to be at stage 5 with 19 percent kidney function. Instead of sitting back and waiting, Marcy has been proactive and identified three potential donors for herself.

She is also determined to help others who have questions and don't know where to turn for help. She plans to start offering lunch and learn programs and eventually would like to start a podcast to help people with various health concerns.

Marcy has built a strong support team to help her, including Dr. Basic, immediate family members, and friends. Also, her colleagues at the Lansing Regional Chamber have been supportive of her work to help others.

"Managing this disease is like a full-time job, and I am so incredibly grateful for the Chamber team for supporting my health and empowering my voice to help others," said Rzepka. "Your support team is one of the most important components of dealing with something like this, but at the end of the day, I decide what defeats me."

Marcy also decided to get involved with the National Kidney Foundation Walk, a fundraiser to raise awareness and fight kidney disease and a celebration of hope for those suffering. The 2021 Greater Lansing Kidney Walk will be virtual this year and take place Sunday, June 13 at 11 a.m. All money raised supports the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan, whose mission is to prevent kidney disease and improve the quality of life for those living with it.

WILX-TV News Anchor David Andrews has served as event emcee for more than 20 years. Andrews was significantly impacted as a teen when his uncle donated his



Andrews

kidney to his aunt, saving her life.

"I saw how important kidney disease was and how it could impact families and people's lives and how organ donation could save someone's life," said Andrews.

This year, participants are encouraged to "lace up" however they want - taking a walk, run, rollerblading, working out at home - whatever they want to do, wherever they want to do it. Participants can sign up and begin fundraising at www.kidneywalk.org, and on walk day (June 13), they will be able to watch the Kidney Walk Program online using their tablet, phone, computer - from anywhere in the world!

"The underlying causes of kidney disease are in everybody's life," said Andrews. "Getting involved in this walk and bringing awareness to this cause will save lives in so many families. Involvement is as easy as putting one foot in front of the other." ■

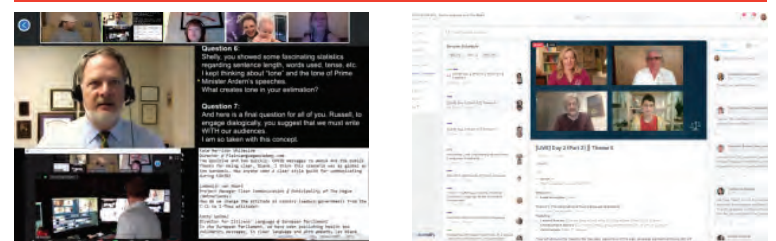
2021 Greater Lansing Kidney Walk

Date: Sunday, June 13 at 11 a.m.
Where: Virtual
Contact: Ryder Comstock
 rcomstock@nkfm.org • (734) 222-9800
Registration: kidneywalk.org/greaterlansing

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International Conference Virtual Production

The conference included live and pre-recorded video, networking, Q&A, and more, on both desktop computers and mobile devices. Together, conference attendees streamed over 4000 viewer-hours of content, including 3 days of live sessions, 35 pre-recorded keynote speakers from 20 different countries, related presentations, 8 live sessions from around the world, and a virtual awards show.



Access for All is a nonprofit working to improve people's access to information and services with plain language. At the conference, there were over 300 participants from around the world, 50% of whom were first-time attendees to a plain language conference, with about 75% of them saying the virtual offering was a major factor in their decision to attend.

Stay safe. Stay connected.
messagemakers.com

Ingham County Health Department: Leading in Challenging Times

The public health sector has been on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Locally, Ingham County Health Department (ICHD) Health Officer Linda Vail has been the out-front leading efforts to handle the local response to the pandemic and now managing the vaccine administration phase. Vail recently spoke with Steve Japinga, vice president of public affairs, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, and shared how the stress has been constant from managing a crisis that has no end. She spoke about leading in challenging times, how it has impacted her personally and her ICHD team.



Vail

Japinga: How do you lead a team when they have to be “on” 24-7 during the pandemic?

Vail: Part of it is to be constantly reminding people, “we can do this.” You go out to the vaccination clinic and we are vaccinating at the beginning with very minimal vaccine. When the Pfizer vaccine came out, we were doing 300 a day. Then we said, we could do 1,000, and we did. Then we said we can do 1,300, then 1,500 and then 2,000. People kept cranking it up and as vaccine allocations increase, we will need to continue to do that. Not only are we doing mass vaccination clinics, but our team is also all over the community doing vaccine clinics at neighborhood centers and pop-up sites. Part of it is recognizing this is exhausting, and part of it is sometimes you have to tell people to take some time off.



Japinga

Japinga: How have you personally been through this, taking care of yourself while caring for your team and the health of the general public during these times?

Vail: The unfortunate part of rising to the top leadership level is there is no peer to vent with or decompress. It becomes really challenging. You have to find some trusted people, whether outside your organization or within that can hear you and let you dump all your woes and lift you back up. I am fortunate to have three phenomenal deputy health officers I trust enough to work through some of those tough issues. I recommend when you are at this level that you find people you can trust completely to have some of those conversations. I only have my lens, so it is important to be able to get another perspective. As far as self-care, I have not done a very good job of it, honestly. I block out some time on my schedule every day to eat and work out. I generally work right through it. I have to do a better job at that. It is a good strategy, but once you develop the strategy, you need to adhere to it.

I have had my moments during the past year where I completely break down and can’t do it anymore. It is anything from crying to overwhelming anxiety. Typically, it happens, maybe 4 or 5 times – somebody said to me I can’t believe that is all that has been. You get through it and keep going. I’ve never found myself go through one of those and come out the other side feeling down a notch. I bounce back pretty well. ■



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Next Phase of the I-496 Redevelopment



The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) presented on the next phase of rebuilding I-496 at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) Lansing-Delhi Township virtual Business Roundtable. The upcoming rebuilding of I-496 from Lansing Road to the Grand River in Ingham County is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2022.

Regional infrastructure is one of the policy priority focus areas for the LRCC. Our government affairs team will continue to advocate at all levels of government to continue their focus on investing in our regional infrastructure. ■

2021 LRC-PAC First Quarter Newsletter

The 2021 first quarter Lansing Regional Chamber-Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) Newsletter hit mailboxes last month! The LRC-PAC works to elect local officials to city councils, township board, county commissioner, and the state legislature that align with LRCC members' priorities.

Head to the LRCC website under the Advocacy tab to find the LRC-PAC newsletter.

Interested in joining the mailing list? Contact Steve Japinga, vice president of public affairs, LRCC at sjapinga@lansingchamber.org for more information. ■



Reopen MI Safely Coalition



“Our downtown business districts depend on the patronage of thousands of office workers who work in our city centers every day,” said Tim Daman, president and CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber. “Without them, city buildings and parking structures remain deserted, and restaurants, coffee houses, and shops remain closed or on the brink of bankruptcy. It is time to allow the option of reopening offices and other businesses safely.”

Reopen Michigan Safely is a newly formed coalition of business leaders focused on reenergizing Michigan's economy. The group was started by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Chamber of Commerce, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, Traverse Connect, Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce, Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce and Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce.

The coalition is urging Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to #EndTheOfficeBan and allow job creators and employees across all industries to work together toward reopening safely. The coalition is also sounding the alarm that Michigan jobs are being permanently lost due to current restrictions and is asking others to join the movement to reopen Michigan now. Additional information can be found at www.reopenmichigansafely.com. ■



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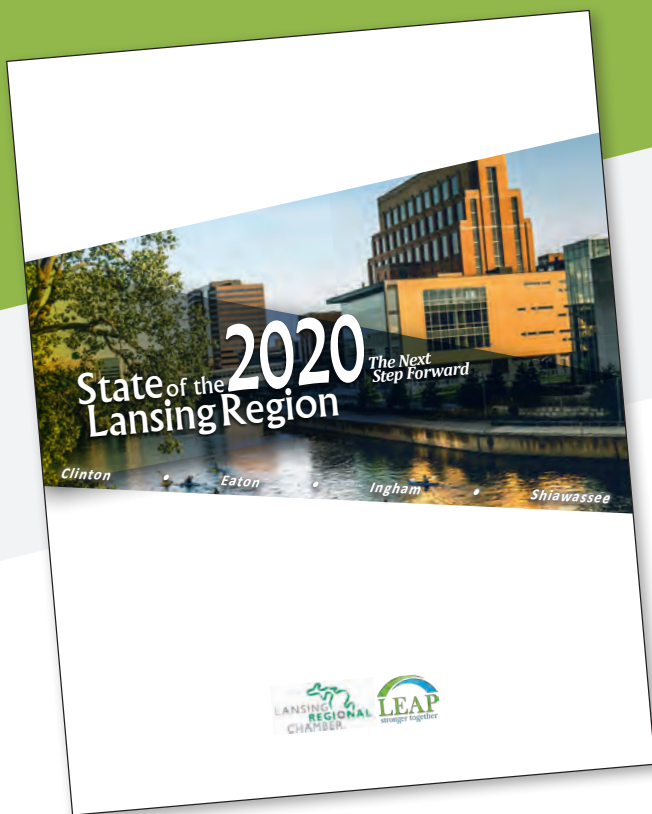


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State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report

The Next Step Forward

As we enter a new decade, the Lansing region, encompassing Ingham, Eaton, Clinton, and Shiawassee counties is in a solid place. Cranes are in the sky. There are an estimated \$3.2 billion in current new investments, with hundreds of millions more and thousands of jobs expected. The Lansing region has successfully positioned itself nationally and globally, competing for and attracting significant foreign investment from Fortune 500 companies.

Though the future looks bright, a group of community leaders has been pushing to accelerate efforts to compete for future jobs and investments. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC), the Lansing Area Economic Partnership (LEAP), and ten other regional partners determined the next step for the region was to gain an accurate assessment of where our region stands in comparison to other thriving communities. After benchmarking the Lansing region against 11 communities, the group resolved it would develop specific strategies to move the region forward.

“For us to take that next big jump as a region, we felt that we needed some priority areas,” said Tim Daman, president & CEO, LRCC.

“We felt it was time for the region to mature to the next level,” said Bob Trezise, president & CEO, LEAP. “We need to enter the major leagues from the minor leagues.”

Upon receiving support from the area’s business leaders and local stakeholders, LRCC and LEAP commissioned Anderson Economic Group to conduct a benchmarking study for the Lansing region. The resulting inaugural State of the Lansing

Region Benchmarking Report compares the Lansing region on 42 indicators relative to 11 peer regions: Ann Arbor, Mich.; Columbus, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; Durham, N.C.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Greenville, S.C.; Hartford, Conn.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Madison, Wis.; Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn., and Nashville, Tenn.

“The number one objective I see for this is to raise awareness for leaders in the Lansing area is that we are competing against some pretty strong other metropolitan areas,” said Patrick Anderson, principal, Anderson Economic Group. “We have strengths to bring to that race and we have weaknesses to address. If we focus on those, we will do well.”

“Many business owners feel they are lucky to be in this region and sense many benefits. But we have lacked the fact base, lacked the vocabulary to represent this to others, lacked the physical presentation tools,” said Wendy Hamilton, CEO of TechSmith and chair of the LRCC Board of Directors. “The greatest value is the communication value – we can more easily share what makes our region special.”

“The greatest value the report can bring to the region



Among the 42 economic indicators compared in the 2019 report, four areas stand out for short-term strategic focus based on their impact on long-term economic growth. They are population growth, educational attainment, private sector growth, and affordability.

is a unified focus on how to position our region and to come together with a plan that will build on the strength of our community,” said April Clobes, CEO, MSU Federal Credit Union.

The report was launched in 2019, pre-Covid pandemic, and the resulting disruption is not reflected in the report’s data. The data collected in the report is viewed as a strong framework that allows

partners to develop a blueprint going forward. Anderson Economic will update the data twice in the next two to four years, allowing the region to assess the impact of COVID more fully and further adjust strategies and tactics as economic circumstances continue to evolve.

“It gives us a great scorecard to know how we are doing and have meaningful conversations around metrics,” said Patrick Dean, vice president of business development, Dean Transportation. “The findings will allow us to implement policies and develop goals for our region so that 15, 20, and 30 years from now we can be the community that we want to be and have a lot of solid growth in our region.”

“We must clearly understand our strengths and opportunities for improvement, and for the first time ever, the State of the Lansing Region



Trezise



Daman



Anderson



Hamilton



Globes



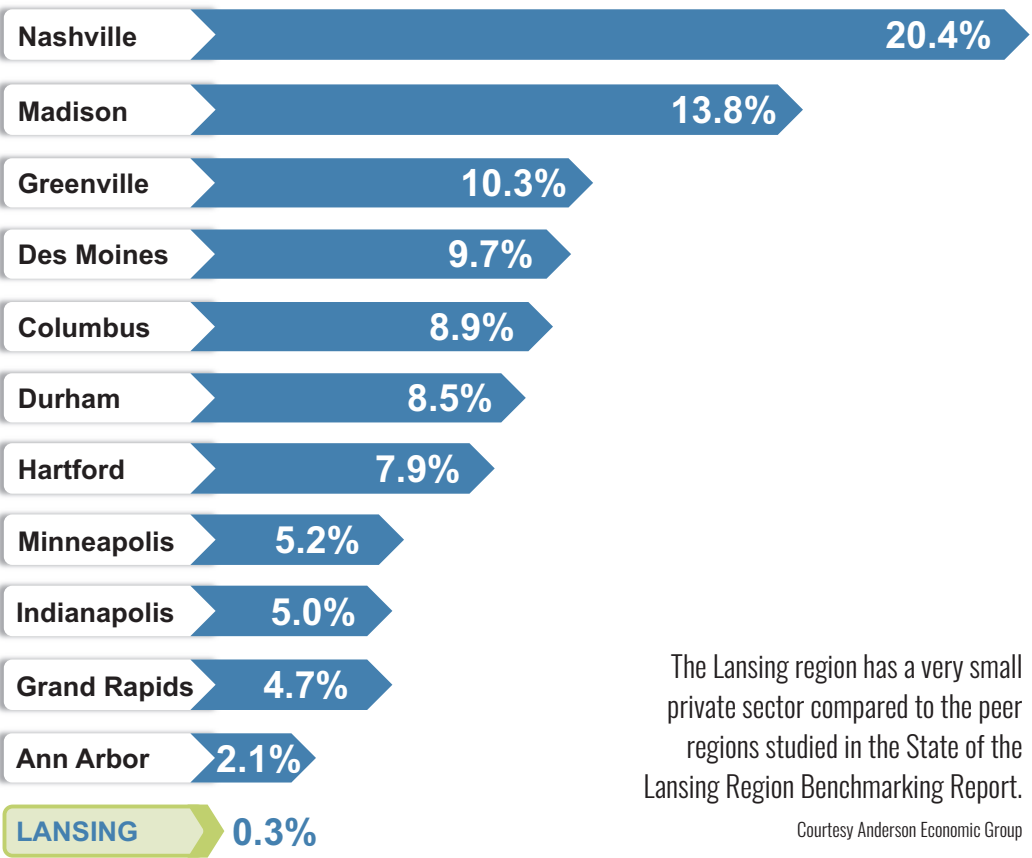
Dean



Curran

ESTABLISHMENT GROWTH 2014-18

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



The Lansing region has a very small private sector compared to the peer regions studied in the State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report.

Courtesy Anderson Economic Group

Benchmarking Report does just that for us,” said Steve Curran, president and creative director, Harvest Creative Services. “Yes, the pandemic has affected growth and expansion here - and around the world, but I believe that as we emerge from a Covid world, this region is going to take off. And because of the State of the Lansing Region Report, we now have a clearer picture of what needs to happen to drive that growth.”

Areas of Strength

The State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report noted five areas of strength for the Lansing region compared to the 11 peer region evaluated in the research; high Gen Z population, growth in median household income, low housing costs, growth in STEM degrees awarded, and university research expenditures growth. Patrick Anderson says the first thing the region needs to do is to understand we have those assets.

“The mid-Michigan region is a great place to raise a family and have a quality of life for a reasonable cost,” said Anderson. “That is something we have

undersold or ignored for way too long.”

In 2018, Lansing had the second-highest share of Gen Z residents (those born between 1997 and 2012). That talent base is indicative of the number of workers just entering or about to enter the workforce.

“Our potential for growth in talent is really high here because that young generation is heavily located in our region,” said Trezise. “There is something unique going on here that is making us attractive for Gen Z, and that is crucial.”

Though the region’s median household income is still low, it has one of the fastest-growing income growth rates. Other areas of strength include housing costs which are not increasing significantly. Affordability remains good.

Lansing ranked second among the 11 regions for growth in STEM degrees. Science, technology, engineering, and math are essential for a robust economy of the future. The strength of the Lansing region here is viewed as a good building block for growth.

STATE OF THE REGION PARTNERS

The State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report would not be possible without the backing of our partners who believe in this project and are committing time and resources towards its successful implementation going forward. LRCC and LEAP would like to express deep appreciation to the following partners: Dean Transportation, Dewpoint, Forsberg Real Estate Company, Harvest Creative Services, Lansing Community College, Maner Costerisan, Michigan State University, MSU Federal Credit Union, Shyft Group and TechSmith.



State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report

The Next Step Forward

University research and development, fueled primarily by Michigan State University (MSU) improves the region's attractiveness to students and talent, and provides an important innovation and entrepreneurship source.

"No matter what we do as a region moving forward, MSU has to be at the center of that," said Daman. "One way to grow the small private sector we have is through entrepreneurial efforts. How do we encourage more start-up activity and at the center of that has to be Michigan State University, and that starts with R & D expenditures?"

Areas of Opportunity

The Lansing area does not compare as favorably on many measures, which the report identifies as areas of opportunities. Five such areas are identified: population growth, high-tech employment, establishments, university start-ups, and educational attainment.

Lansing ranked last in the survey in the growth in business establishments. The region has a diverse group of large and small businesses. In 2018, more than 10,000 business establishments were located in the region, representing one of the lowest numbers among the peer regions. The Lansing region's number of establishments has remained stagnant since 2014, increasing substantially in several peer regions.

"The small scope of our private sector from the number of establishments to the number of jobs is a huge challenge," said Daman. "We all know that for years, we've been known as this three-legged stool with GM, state government and MSU. Clearly, our private sector is lagging behind other regions."

"We need to focus on growing our private sector employers, investors, and entrepreneurs," said Anderson. "If we do that, then we can address our weaknesses in terms of the number of new businesses and the growth we need to find in skilled workers."

Since 2014, the Lansing region's population increased by less than 2 percent, while most peer regions experienced much higher growth rates. Population growth indicates how well a region attracts and retains residents.

"The low rate of population growth is attached to the problem with the small private sector," said Trezise.



Courtesy Anderson Economic Group

"What comes first, the people or the business? That is a weakness that we need to understand about ourselves."

Though Lansing has seen a proliferation of successful technology companies in the past decade, the region has a relatively low share of employment in information technology, advanced manufacturing, and research and development. A higher percentage of high-tech employment indicates economic prosperity and strength.

Short-Term Strategic Focus

Among the 42 economic indicators compared in the 2019 report, four areas stand out for short-term strategic focus based on their impact on long-term economic growth. They are population growth, educational attainment, private sector growth, and affordability.

The State of the Lansing Region partners recommend an analysis of population growth, educational attainment, private sector growth, and affordability in the current economic climate to best position the region for action in those four areas.

Lansing 2025 Pathway to Prosperity

One of the dangers inherent in high-profile research projects is that resulting recommendations do not result in action. Partners in the State of the Lansing Region project insist they are putting in place strategies to ensure the community keeps the report and resulting blueprint for action as a top agenda item in the years to come.

"We are going to repeat this study for a second and third time over the next three years," said Trezise. "That will keep it on the front burner."

“This should put all of us on notice including government leaders that we will be coming back and measuring how we are doing,” said Anderson. “The we are going to face both the areas where we have done better and the areas where we didn’t do better. That kind of discipline is the hallmark of championship teams in nearly every sport, successful businesses, and successful communities.”

Lansing 2025 Pathway to Prosperity will serve as the action strategy coming out of the inaugural State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report. In the immediate future, the group plans several steps, including:

- Updating 2019 data to reflect the Covid-19 crisis impact;
- Convening investors to proposed next steps with the Lansing 2025 Pathway to Prosperity;
- Hosting a business roundtable to introduce the State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report and determine the next steps;
- Convening a Lansing 2025 Pathway to Prosperity steering committee to propose alignment with existing regional economic plans.

“There is going to be accountability from the steering committee and the business community,”



said Daman. “We are not creating new initiatives or organizations. There is a lot of work being done in these areas now. We have to focus on how we facilitate and bring some of this together to get people working in tandem.”

The State of the Lansing Region partners also plan local and statewide media relations outreach, and local government roundtables to introduce the action plan.

As the project partners move to implement the State of the Lansing Region action strategy, they know there is room to build upon the Lansing region’s many assets. The region currently benefits from Michigan’s favorable tax climate and access to excellent higher education and research institutions. Leveraging the enormous strengths, the region already possesses will place Greater Lansing in a better position to tackle head-on the opportunities that exist to take the region to the next level. ■



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Capital Region Airport Authority Selects Nicole Noll-Williams as CEO

THE CRAA OPERATES THE CAPITAL REGION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MASON JEWETT AIRPORT AND PORT LANSING

The Capital Region Airport Authority (CRAA) Board of Directors has named Nicole Noll-Williams as the new president and CEO of the Capital Region International Airport (LAN), after a yearlong national search. Noll-Williams, well known in the community, is currently mid-Michigan regional director for U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, a position she has held since 2018.



Noll-Williams

The CRAA operates LAN, including Port Lansing logistics and cargo services, and Mason Jewett Airport in Mason.

The decision was made at the March CRAA Board of Directors meeting. CRAA Board Chair John Shaski said the CRAA Board is thrilled for the future of LAN and the deep ties and breadth of transportation industry knowledge that Noll-Williams — who has more than 25 years of experience in various areas of the airline, airport, and travel management industries, and government relations — brings.

“We had a group of exceptional candidates from across the country, a testament to both our airport’s past successes and future opportunities,” said Shaski. “Nicole brings significant depth and experience to help navigate our growth, and she has a deep appreciation for how important this airport — a gateway to more than 500 destinations worldwide — is to the mid-Michigan region.”

The appointment is a homecoming for Noll-Williams, who served as the airport’s customer satisfaction and air service development director from 2013 to 2018, and its regional market development director from 2004 to 2013.

“I am honored and excited to return to the airport to be the president and CEO of the Capital Region Airport Authority,” said Noll-Williams. “The airport is a valuable economic asset in the Lansing region, and we need to work through the many challenging issues facing the aviation industry. We have a good team and authority board in place with terrific support from area businesses.”

A start date has not been determined. Robert Benstein, who has been serving as interim CEO of LAN since December 2019, will continue to lead the airport as the interim CEO. ■



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Michigan State University and Lansing Community College Form Partnership to Improve Access to Higher Education, Strengthen Transfer Process

Michigan State University (MSU) and Lansing Community College (LCC) have formalized a partnership that improves access to a four-year degree, increases student success and helps build a pipeline of talent to meet the needs of the mid-Michigan economy.

The partnership, called Envision Green, provides a seamless transition from LCC to MSU by embedding MSU advisors within LCC to guide students through their educational journey — a transition more than 5,500 LCC students have made over the last decade. With this partnership in place, prospective LCC students can consider MSU from the start of their higher education journey. The affordability of the LCC-to-MSU path means a four-year-degree is an option for more people in the region — crucial for building and retaining an educated workforce in Michigan.

“This formalizes something that has existed informally for years,” said Mark Largent, MSU associate provost of undergraduate education and dean of undergraduate studies. “By formalizing it, we are creating a more equitable and transparent space for our students.”

“By being more intentional about the pathway is really important first for the equity reasons,” said Steve Robinson, president, LCC. “Folks have been transferring from LCC to MSU for a long time. “By being intentional, more students will benefit.”

It is estimated that community colleges are the entry point for close to half of America’s post-secondary students, making this partnership a win-win for students, the institutions, and the local community.



The Envision Green memorandum of understanding specifies a one-year partnership with an option for renewal, and states both parties’ intention to continue to grow the relationship. Both institutions want to make it easier to plan an academic path from one institution to the other.

“I always wanted to go to MSU, that was my dream school,” said Sarah Day, a junior at MSU majoring in special education who transferred from LCC. “LCC was an amazing option for my situation coming out of high school, which put me in a better financial situation. I know this program will benefit many students who are a bit lost and not fully aware of all the options that exist. This will fill in a lot of gaps for those students.”

As part of the relationship outlined in the MOU, the

institutions will:

- Provide two MSU academic advisors one day a week on LCC’s downtown campus;
- Communicate MSU transfer credit changes and MSU transfer credit process changes to MSU advisors at LCC and LCC employees;
- Work individually with LCC students to facilitate a smooth transition from LCC to MSU before transferring to MSU.

The partnership’s benefits extend beyond campus, as well. In an era when post-secondary credentials are in increasing demand, broader access to higher education ensures the mid-Michigan region is an attractive prospect for startups and businesses looking to expand. ■

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W002884

Millcraft: Four Generations Placing Customers and Community First

BY MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

Millcraft, a fourth-generation, family-owned business, has placed the community first since its opening 101 years ago. The Cleveland-based company, with facilities throughout the Midwest, opened a Lansing location in January.

Beginning as a stationery company, Millcraft has evolved through the years—providing various forms of innovative paper and packaging solutions.

“The value of a merchant has always been to put the customer first and work backward,” said Matt Freed, regional manager for Millcraft. “We do exactly that—as the needs of our customers have evolved, we’ve evolved with them.”

Those working with Millcraft have access to over 20 million dollars of inventory, providing material for traditional copy paper, floor graphics, envelopes, very fine substrates, and everything in between. The local company has specialists in all printing areas allowing for same or next day service.

Millcraft held to its core value of making a meaningful impact as a new member to the community and donated 10,000 masks, hand sanitizer and gloves to Holt Public Schools.

“As challenging as this year was, there was no better time to expand. We used our supply chain both domestically and internationally to provide materials,” said Freed.

Giving back is nothing new for the paper merchant. Millcraft started a ‘buy and give’ program five years ago by donating a dollar of every carton of traditional copy paper bought to charity and matching that dollar.



Millcraft made additional donations to Mott Children’s Hospital in Ann Arbor and Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, OH.

“At the core of everything we do is for the community. We hope to be a resource in all capacities—as a paper merchant and a local leader,” said Freed. “We believe in partnerships, not just customers.”

For further information, visit millcraft.com. To speak with someone at the Lansing facility, located at 2556 Alamo Drive, call (517) 348-1171. ■



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Bethany Changing the World, and Lansing Community through Family

BY MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

Bethany’s goal is simple: aid those in need. From adoption, foster care, and overall family assistance Bethany Christian Services has been ministering to the community for more than 75 years.

With the global headquarters located in Grand Rapids, and a local office in East Lansing, the fully accredited organization works in 35 states and more than a dozen countries, serving more than 50,000 people yearly.

Through the years Bethany has continually aimed to include and assist people from all backgrounds. Recently, the nonprofit approved practice of inclusivity across all service lines to ensure every individual in need feels welcomed.

“Bethany aimed to create consistency across all offices to better serve,” said Krista Stevens, executive branch director of East Lansing. “Bethany is committed to



Stevens

non-discriminatory practices. We will work with anyone interested in providing a safe, stable home for children.”

Bethany offers many services, including transitional foster care, specifically created to provide help for unaccompanied refugee and immigrant minors. Bethany helps families receive foster parenting licensure. The organization offers Safe Families, a family preservation program allowing children to temporarily stay with another family as their guardian(s) get back on their feet. Bethany also has pregnancy counseling services created for families experiencing an unexpected pregnancy.

“Welcoming people of all nationalities, race, heritage, gender, and sexuality is on the public’s radar now more than ever before,” Stevens said. “Although Bethany has always worked to include everyone, we wanted to make it very clear and intentional that we provide services accessible to all.”

To learn more about other Bethany programs, how you can get involved, or donate, visit: Bethany.org/eastlansing. ■





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Origami Gets a New Name, Logo and Additional Location

Origami Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center announced that it has changed its name to Origami Rehabilitation. The new name reflects the evolution of the diversity of services and programs available to children, adolescents, and adults with neurological, developmental, mental health, and orthopedic conditions.

Since opening in 1997, Origami began as a residential program specialized in serving adults with traumatic brain injury and gradually expanded to become a unique multi-dimensional continuum of care serving children, adolescents, and adults. For the past several years, Origami has strategically diversified its population served and maximized access to care for individuals with diagnoses such as stroke, post-concussion syndrome, Parkinson's, spinal cord injury, Cerebral Palsy, deficits stemming from brain tumors, aneurysms, and more.

"We are excited to use the new name to reach a broader population in need of our expert neuro care and many other services that our team specializes in," said Tammy Hannah, president and CEO. "Origami has evolved so much over the years, and although neuro will always be our niche, our former name just doesn't tell our whole story any longer."

In addition to the new name change, Origami Rehabilitation is adding another location to better serve individuals in need of its services in the community. The new location will offer the same outpatient services available at their Mason location, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, psychiatry, psychology, vocational services, and more. The new outpatient clinic will open in June 2021 and will be located at 137 S. Marketplace Blvd. in Lansing.



"Both of these initiatives will allow us to reach and serve more individuals in need of the services we provide and directly contributes to realizing our vision as we strive to be the leader in maximizing access to innovative services with exceptional results," said Hannah. "Our team is looking forward to continuing our journey as we make a lasting impact on those we serve by creating opportunities and transforming lives."

Origami Rehabilitation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Origami provides comprehensive rehabilitation for children, adolescents, and adults with neurological, developmental, mental health, and orthopedic conditions through their residential and outpatient programs. With their compassionate and innovative services, Origami creates opportunities and transforms lives.

To learn more about Origami's programs and services, call (517) 455-0264. Additional information about Origami is located online at www.origamirehab.org. ■





The Lansing Regional Chamber was pleased to have the **Michigan Education Trust** as our virtual host sponsor for the April Member Mixer. MET chose to support downtown Lansing with the gift card purchase. The group enjoyed a business update from Cathleen Edgerly with Downtown Lansing Inc. 40 business and community leaders came together to laugh, share, and connect over Zoom. We thank all the attendees for being such great participants during these events. For more information on the next Member Mixer, please visit the Chamber Calendar on our website, www.lansingchamber.org.



The team at Carbidex was very excited to host a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 20 for **The Botanical Co.**, a cannabis retail storefront located at 3535 Capitol City Blvd., Lansing. Carbidex is the parent company for The Botanical Co., with retail locations in Lansing, Tawas, and Kalkaska (opening May 2021), the Lansing cultivation field Franklin Fields, and the processing division BioBizz. There is much to celebrate for Carbidex as they are a 2021 Michigan Celebrates Small Business recipient of the “50 Companies to Watch” Award, the only cannabis company recognized this year or ever.

New Hires



Dr. Jayson Field, an ABOG-certified gynecologic oncologist, has recently joined **Michigan State University Health Care** and **Karmanos Cancer Institute at McLaren Greater Lansing**, bringing care close to home for people who are battling gynecological cancer. There are several forms of gynecological cancer, including cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, vulvar, fallopian tube, and gestational trophoblastic disease.



Kangas

The **Capital Area Manufacturing Council** is pleased to announce the appointment of **Cindy Kangas** as the new executive director. Cindy is a lifelong Lansing area resident with an extensive non-profit background. Kangas' hiring comes as the council implements a plan of strategic growth.

Awards

Angelica Mendoza, an emergency department technician at **McLaren Greater Lansing**, has been recognized as one of the Lansing Latino Health Alliance's 2020 Outstanding Hispanic/Latino Caregivers. This award is given annually to a caregiver who has made a significant difference a patient's life, exceeded expectations in carrying out his or her responsibilities, and demonstrated professionalism in the workplace. A co-worker nominated Mendoza for exemplifying excellence in those areas.

The **Lansing Community College** student newspaper, *The Lookout* earned 13 awards, including Newspaper of the Year, in the 2020 Michigan Press Association Better Newspaper Contest. The announcement came on March 25 during a virtual press conference via Zoom. The Lookout was among 20 newspapers that competed in the college MPA competition, with 746 total entries presented. Competing in Division 3 of the competition, for newspapers published less than weekly, The Lookout competed against several two-year colleges, including Washtenaw Community College, Henry Ford Community College, Schoolcraft College, Monroe County Community College, and Grand Rapids Community College.

State leaders celebrated capital area leadership in talent development through community partnerships at the first-ever virtual Michigan Works! Association Impact Awards. Local lawmakers and statewide talent development officials gathered virtually on March 31 to recognize **MWC** and **Capital Area Michigan Works!** for promoting the importance of community partnerships and involvement through initiatives to benefit residents and the overall community. MWC is a large-scale cheese and whey protein manufacturing facility in St. Johns. As a new joint venture between

Dairy Farmers of America, Select Milk Producers, and Glanbia Nutritionals, which owns 50 percent of the venture. MWC understands the importance of creating relationships with existing manufacturing employers and residents.

Mary Free Bed at Sparrow Inpatient Rehabilitation has been honored for the third year for patient satisfaction. Sparrow Carson, Clinton, and Eaton community hospitals received the recognition from Professional Research Consultants (PRC), Inc. The PRC Excellence in Healthcare Awards are nationally recognized honors presented to organizations and individuals who have achieved excellence in patient satisfaction scores in the prior year.

Bergmann of Lansing has earned a national recognition award for exemplary engineering achievement in the American Council of Engineering Companies' 54th annual Engineering Excellence Awards for the Allen Creek Berm Opening Project in Ann Arbor, Mich. For years, a railroad berm parallel to the Huron River caused frequent flooding north of downtown Ann Arbor and blocked access to riverside trails. As part of an \$8 million improvement project, Bergmann worked with the city and railroad to design a new berm opening that would address both problems yet safeguard rail operations. A new 14-foot-wide pedestrian underpass and bridge connects to the trail, while twin 12-foot-wide box culverts convey stormwater to the Huron River. Bergmann provides architectural, engineering, and planning services across the U.S. and Canada.

Distinctions

Two **Michigan State University Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU)** employees were selected for Filene Research Institute's i3 program, joining more

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than 260 credit union industry innovators. Among those selected include **Ami Iceman-Haueter**, MSUFCU assistant vice president of research and digital experience, and **Ben Maxim**, MSUFCU assistant vice president of digital strategy and innovation. i3 is a two-year innovation leadership program equipping top credit union professionals with the mindset, tools, and network to lead and shape the credit union of the 21st Century. The program's applied learning model puts 'impact' at the center to maximize results at the individual, organizational, and community levels.

President and CEO **Van W. Martin** of **Martin Commercial Properties** is among a select group of highly-credentialed real estate professionals identifying current concerns shaping the commercial real estate industry. For 2020-2021, Covid-19 tops the list, with unprecedented effects rippling throughout the remaining issues. Each year, the Counselors of Real Estate® reports on the Top Ten Issues Affecting Real Estate®. The group foresees that 2021 will continue to test the resilience of industry professionals as they face what they describe as "the greatest environmental experience of our real estate lives." The landscape will be challenging," said Martin. "However, real estate professionals who can adjust to the demands and requirements of the "next normal" will succeed.



Young

A driven, talented visionary with unwavering optimism. That's how **Dr. Rachel Young, D.O., McLaren Greater Lansing Family Medicine Clinical Director and Associate Program Director** was described in her nomination for the New Osteopathic Physician of the Year Award from the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFPP). At just 34 years old, Dr. Young's accomplishments live up to her last name. After being in private practice for five years, she became the youngest president of the Michigan Association of Osteopathic Family Physicians (MAOFP), serving in the role from 2018-2019 after being honored as the Family Medicine Resident of the Year by the MAOFP.

Downtown Lansing, Inc. is proud to announce two beloved downtown businesses were selected to receive highly competitive Match on Main grant funds from the **Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)**. **Impression 5 Science Center** and **Summit Comics & Games** were awarded over \$37,000 combined, to support projects that include an online store for Impression 5's gift shop, and support for the expansion of Summit Comics & Games. The MEDC Match on Main program strives to provide grants aimed at supporting small local businesses to create resiliency and strengthen downtowns.

Promotions

MSUFCU has named six employees to management positions: **Nick Grecu** – member solutions and recovery manager; **Mae Holmes** – specialty accounts manager; **Katie Knop** – manager of the Holt branch; **Kara Maxey** – manager of the Farm Lane branch; **Nicole Reid** – assistant manager of the Downtown/Sparrow branch and **Rose Spencer** – assistant manager of the Marsh branch.



Singleton



Whitaker

CASE Credit Union recently announced two promotions within its team. **Rachael**

Singleton was named executive vice president and **Robert Whitaker** is the new vice president of lending. In her new role, Singleton will oversee branch operations, the contact center, resolutions, compliance and marketing. Whitaker's new position will allow him to manage consumer, mortgage and business lending.

Board of Directors & Executive Committee Updates



Beck



Goss

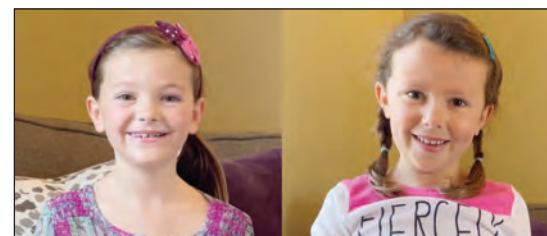
Ele's Place Capital Region is pleased to announce the appointment of new community board member

Kurt Beck from Plante & Moran, PLLC. Kurt is stepping in to fill the position of **Michelle Goss**, who served Ele's Place for six years. The organization is grateful for Michelle's amazing service and looks forward to their continued relationship with Plante & Moran, PLLC through Kurt. Kurt and the community board are working with staff to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Ele's Place. For details on activities, please visit: www.elesplace.org/give-30.

Peckham has named a new director to its board, **Monique C. Field Foster**, senior counsel at Warner Norcross + Judd, one of Michigan's largest and most successful law firms. An experienced lobbyist and policy analyst, Foster has nearly 20 years of experience in government affairs. She concentrates her practice on all facets of government affairs, including policy strategy and development, analysis and drafting of legislation, legislative events, state procurement, and other advocacy initiatives.

Company News

Martin Commercial Properties, a leading privately-owned real estate services and development company has facilitated the sale of a restaurant building at 1861 S. Scott St. in St. Johns, Mich. The seller of the property is Mercantile Bank of Michigan. The purchaser is **Keith Koneval**, a Mid-Michigan entrepreneur. The free-standing family restaurant was initially built in 1990 for Dairy Queen and is well-positioned in the St. Johns commercial corridor near the N.E. corner of Old US-27 and E. Townsend Road. Martin Commercial Properties represented the seller in the transaction, with the sale facilitated by **Thomas Jamieson**, senior associate, office advisor.



From left, Lucy and Piper Westrin, DeWitt, are among the youth who will provide readings for LAFCU's "March Magic" Listen & Learn event, on March 24.

LAFCU recently partnered with DeWitt District Library to present "March Magic," one of the Michigan credit union's Listen & Learn events that encourages reading through fun, interesting, and informative ways. It was directed to children up to age 12. This interactive event included a magic show, a flute performance, and a story time, all presented by Lansing's tri-county area residents.



MSUFCU, its board of directors, management, and community members celebrated a virtual grand opening of the Credit Union's branch at 6051 Sashabaw Road in Clarkston, Mich., on March 6. The 20-person team at the Sashabaw location has been busy since the branch opened in December 2020, opening new accounts and loans while saving members money.

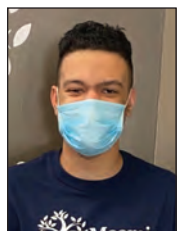
At the **Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)**, they recognize that the most prosperous communities are those that are most inclusive and willing to provide pathways to fulfillment for all people. As the regional economic development organization for Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties, LEAP takes charge to advance economic prosperity equitably

for all residents of greater Lansing seriously. In the wake of the recent attacks against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) businesses and people in Atlanta, which resulted in the deaths of six AAPI women, LEAP finds it imperative to reaffirm their organizational commitment to denounce all forms of systemic harm, racism, discrimination and violence against all historically disenfranchised populations, including AAPI.

Martin Commercial Properties has offered an additional 16.5 acres of land a mixed-use development next to a 10-acre redevelopment underway at the southwest corner of Marsh and Haslett Roads in Haslett, Mich. Zoned for a five-story development, the parcel provides an ideal setting for residential and mixed-use projects. It complements the independent living community slated to replace the Haslett Village Square Shopping Center.

Five budding female entrepreneurs pitched at the **LEAP's** March 11 virtual Hatching event, the quarterly pitch competition's first event of 2021. March's pitch lineup included an apparel and gift boutique geared toward the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, the first historically African-American intercollegiate Greek lettered sorority; a dating app intended to give people with "nerdy" interests a space to connect; a community support organization that aims to help people heal from trauma through the benefits of lavender; and a personal organization service and movement. The top prize went to current LEAP One and All participant **Khailea Pond's** Shopping with Khai, a customer-oriented personal shopping service providing an affordable alternative to other major personal shopping services with the convenience of multiple store options in one delivery.

Lansing Community College held its Annual Equal Pay Day event virtually 8:30-10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 31. U.S. Representative Elissa Slotkin was the keynote speaker. Equal Pay Day represents the date when most women had to work to earn what their male counterparts made the previous year. It came on March 24 for most women. However, Black women will have to work until Aug. 3 for their equal payday; Native American women will have to work until Sept. 8, and Latino women will have to work until Oct. 21 for their equal payday.



Wolbeck

For **Joseph Wolbeck**, a former student in **Ingham Intermediate School District's** Project SEARCH program with the State of Michigan, the pandemic could have derailed his future plans. As a Lansing Public Schools student, Joseph was enrolled in the State of Michigan

Project SEARCH program when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. When State of Michigan employees began working remotely, the opportunities for in-person internships were eliminated. Luckily for

Joseph, a local insurance agency, The Eric King Agency, was willing to give him a shot. As an intern with Project SEARCH, Joseph learned various office tasks such as mail sorting and distributing, alphabetizing, and inputting information from files into a given spreadsheet.

MSUFCU employees have chosen four charity partners for 2021 – one for each quarter. Employees will support REACH Studio Art, Salus Center, New Hope Pet Rescue, and Firecracker Foundation through volunteer and fundraising efforts. Each year, Credit Union employees work together to support local charities. Employees raised more than \$222,000 for their selected 2020 charity partners, despite the challenges of fundraising while keeping socially distanced. This year, employees will focus on one organization each quarter, instead of all four organizations year-round, to improve engagement with that charity partner.

Sparrow is proud to introduce a new communication channel to provide healthcare information and expertise to mid-Michigan, a regular podcast called Sparrow Speaks. Sparrow Speaks is expected to feature at least two new segments a month with leading Sparrow clinicians and subject matter experts. The first three broadcasts feature Joel Cohn, M.D., of Sparrow Thoracic and Cardiovascular Institute (TCI); Mindy Lane, D.O., of Sparrow Bariatrics; and Ali Sheikh, D.O., also of Sparrow TCI. You can download or listen at Sparrow.org/SparrowSpeaks, as well as subscribe wherever you listen to your podcasts.

Twenty-three entrepreneurs from across the Lansing region celebrated the end of a two-month business growth journey, with the second program of One and All, an inclusive entrepreneurship initiative created in 2020 by the **LEAP** and funded by the **MEDC** and the **Consumers Energy Foundation**. The inaugural program began Aug. 26, 2020, and graduated 17 participants Oct. 22, 2020. Through a unique and intensive two-month program, the entrepreneurs and small-business owners were immersed in an intensive experience of business and communication training, coaching, and mentoring, access to an extended professional network and a small seed investment. Lack of access to these critical resources is a common obstacle to success, especially for the underrepresented populations the One and All program supports.



A controlled burn that will help promote plant diversity and the growth of native species has been successfully conducted at **ALIVE, Sparrow Eaton Hospital's** community-based health park. The burn,

conducted at **PRESERVE**, a grassland prairie on the grounds of **ALIVE**, removed hazardous levels of overgrown invasive species and laid the groundwork for an improved habitat for the enjoyment of their many visitors. It was held in collaboration with the Eaton Conservation District, the Charlotte Fire Department, and Pheasants Forever.

Lake Michigan Credit Union was a proud sponsor of the 2021 **EVERFI** Financial Literacy Bee, held April 1-15. The **EVERFI** Financial Literacy Bee is a nationwide financial literacy scholarship competition for students age 13-18. The **EVERFI** Financial Literacy Bee provides students the opportunity to learn the critical importance of saving and budgeting for their short-term and long-term financial goals. This virtual challenge, created by **EVERFI**, features short digital lessons followed by an essay contest in which students share a short-term or long-term savings goal and outline their plan to achieve that goal. The three selected winners of the **EVERFI** Financial Literacy Bee will receive up to \$10,000 in college scholarships.

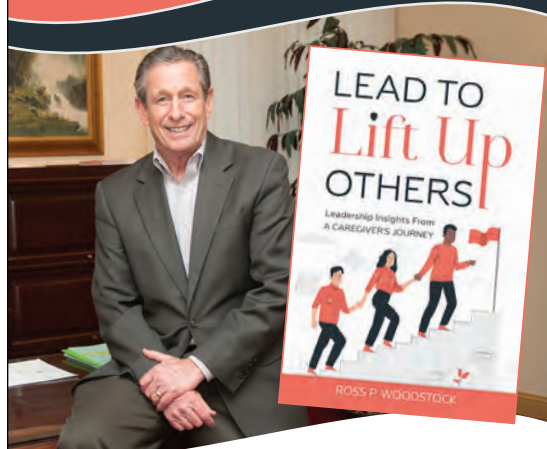


Junior Achievement of Mid-Michigan (JAMM) kicked off spring with a fun virtual scavenger hunt fundraising event to support financial literacy education programming for Lansing area students. The event ran from April 5-18. JAMM invited community members to get outside, get some fresh air and get a change of scenery by searching for items on the JAMM Scavenger Hunt list. The event was designed to support social distancing while giving participants a chance to interact safely and in a fun way. Teams located items from a 'hunt list' and uploaded a selfie to a designated Google file. The JAMM Spring Scavenger Hunt was presented by Jackson as the title sponsor, and Auto-Owners Insurance was the work readiness sponsor.

MSUFCU has reached \$6 billion in assets, a milestone in the credit union's history. It took MSUFCU just over two years to grow from \$4 billion in assets to \$5 billion, and this latest milestone was achieved less than one year after that – on March 17.

Jackson® Field™ is joining a growing number of ballparks that had gone entirely cashless when the Minor League Baseball season opened on May 4.

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Credit and debit cards are accepted at all concession stands and the Nuts & Bolts Retail Store. Also, fans can access the StaySeated mobile ordering platform via the StaySeated app, allowing them to have food and beverage delivered to their seat or picked up at a designated location in the stadium.



Stacy Turke (right) is working with elementary students. She is in her 36th year as an Occupational Therapist at Ingham ISD.

During April, the American Occupational Therapy Association celebrated the important role that occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants play in the lives of others. Common occupational therapy interventions include helping children with disabilities to participate fully in school and social situations, helping people recover from an injury to regain skills, and providing supports for older adults experiencing physical and cognitive changes. At **Ingham Intermediate School District**, occupational therapists are helping the families of babies reach milestones, assisting students in Autism Spectrum Disorder classrooms, and helping students with disabilities lead fuller lives. Services typically include individualized evaluation, customized intervention to improve the student's ability to perform daily activities, and outcome evaluations to ensure the goals are being met and/or make changes to the intervention plan.

Sparrow Health System and UnitedHealthcare have expanded their network relationship, giving people enrolled in UnitedHealthcare employer-sponsored, and individual health plans access to Sparrow Hospital and Sparrow Specialty Hospital in Lansing as well as Sparrow Clinton Hospital in St. Johns. UnitedHealthcare members enrolled in employer-sponsored, and individual plans continue to have in-network access to Sparrow Carson, Eaton, and Ionia hospitals.



LAFCU, in partnership with the Michigan Credit Union Foundation, has opened applications for the LAFCU Hotspot Program. As part of the program,

40 or more hotspots with three months of internet connectivity will be given to selected applicants from the mid-Michigan area. The application deadline is Saturday, May 8. Applicants are asked to include a description of their situation and personal need in the short application. For more information and to apply, visit the Michigan credit union's website at www.LAFCU.com/hotspot.

Liberty Coin Service in Lansing has forwarded the names of 52 prominent American women received in the company's March public survey to help select. Twenty might be individually depicted on the U.S. Mint's quarters placed into circulation starting in 2022 through 2025. U.S. Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin's office received the accompanying list on April 9.



Dozens of people took to the pathway behind **MSUFCU's** headquarters building during the last weekend in March 2021 for the annual Run for the House fundraiser. The event supports the Ronald McDonald House of Mid-Michigan (RMHMM) in Lansing. The nonprofit provides lodging and food for families with children being treated for serious illnesses in area hospitals. This year's Run for the House was different, with a virtual component and an open course, along MSUFCU's Headquarters campus. The event had 346 participants and raised \$36,188 for RMHMM between March 26 and March 28.

Last fall, the Michigan Department of Education announced the Child Care Relief Fund grant program, which utilizes \$215.8 million in CARES Act and Coronavirus Relief Funds to support childcare expenses for those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, **Holt Public Schools (HPS)** was notified that it had received \$17,000 to use to offset costs of those who utilize district childcare through Midway Early Learning Center as well as School Age Childcare programs. Recently, HPS issued rebate checks back to families of \$200 per child.

Application Specialist Kompany (ASK), a Lansing-based managed IT services and cybersecurity provider, announced that it will join forces with Convergence Networks / Grade A. The merger will be done in partnership with private equity firm Riverside Partners and will combine their leadership teams and staff. The merger will bring ASK and leading MSPs in their respective markets and formalize a long and fruitful relationship between like-minded peers. ■

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