

# FOCUS

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

**HELP WANTED**

**GREATER LANSING  
BATTLES THE  
TALENT GAP**

## Meet the Annual Dinner Award Winners

JOAN NELSON - COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

PUBLIC SECTOR CONSULTANTS - OUTSTANDING SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

QUALITY DAIRY - CHAMBER LEGACY AWARD



**TIM DAMAN**  
President and CEO  
Lansing Regional  
Chamber of Commerce



## Reopening Offices and Relaunching Our Economy

**R**ecent announcements from the CDC and Michigan's Vacc to Normal Plan can be viewed as positive first steps in returning to some normalcy. It also allows for new opportunities for the activities we need to fully relaunch our vibrant regional economy, including returning to in-person work, reopening offices, and moving towards hosting larger meeting and events, dining, and other entertainment options.

There remains a great deal of uncertainty about what "normal" will look like, as reflected in a recent member survey conducted by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC). When we asked members their biggest challenges in resuming normal business operations, the answers were evenly split between bringing employees back to the office, getting employees vaccinated, and instituting new health protocols. Though most employees say they are interested in being vaccinated, 35 percent still say they are unsure. Three out of four employers say they will encourage vaccinations. However, 17 percent said they would not be involved in that decision.

For the past year, the LRCC has taken a leadership position in the RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force, an initiative of business, education, and government leaders committed to providing regional employers with the latest information and tools to assist them in successfully relaunching their operations. Our latest effort is our Trusted Voices video series, which features trusted leaders in the region discussing why getting vaccinated is so important. I would encourage you to view these videos (*RELAUNCH Greater Lansing - Comprehensive Strategy to Reopen Business*) and share them with members of your team and other stakeholders, particularly those who have yet to be vaccinated.

Though the immediate outlook for how this will play out remains in question, several encouraging signs give a reason for optimism. The first occurred the second weekend in May when Michigan State University held graduation ceremonies. For the first time in over a year, we saw hotels more fully occupied, restaurants brimming with business, and traffic packing local streets. It was a great feeling.

We have also seen the regional sports economy leading the way in bringing tourists back to town, most notably with the hosting of the NCAA Division III women's golf tournament and a major adult softball tournament leading off a summer filled with sports activities.

For the LRCC, we couldn't be more excited to host our Annual Dinner in-person on Thursday, June 10. We look forward to seeing you as we celebrate with a strolling dinner at Jackson Field and recognize our award recipients: Joan Nelson, Community Service Award; Public Sector Consultants, Outstanding Small Business; and Quality Dairy, Chamber Legacy Award.

We all recognize that we may never fully return to the pre-Covid life. That is not a bad thing. We have all learned a few things the past year that we can do differently and, by doing so, strengthened our operations. We should view the next few months as a positive transition needed to relaunch a diverse, vibrant economy and the opportunity to take important steps in building a better, more dynamic region. ■



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### 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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#### Editor

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) hosts numerous events monthly, from Member Mixers to Lansing Economic Club programs. The events and programming provide valuable content and information and give members unique opportunities to connect and network. The LRCC also hosts 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 REGIONAL CHAMBER ANNUAL DINNER

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

**Location:** Jackson Field

**Description:** Tired of virtual networking events? Look no further. Secure your spot today for the in-person LRCC Annual Dinner at Jackson Field. The event will take place Thursday, June 10, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. We're excited to celebrate the following award recipients:

- Joan Nelson, Allen Neighborhood Center, Community Service Award
- Public Sector Consultants, Outstanding Small Business Award
- Quality Dairy, Legacy Award

**The event will feature a strolling dinner, drinks, and good conversation. It will allow attendees to reconnect in-person (not via Zoom!) with their favorite business professionals.** It will also celebrate the previous year's 10 Over the Next Ten, Celebration of Regional Growth, ATHENA and ATHENA PowerLink recipients, and LRCC Ambassadors. **Tickets cost \$65 for members and \$75 for non-members.**

The LRCC will continue to review and adhere to current CDC Covid-19 guidelines as we move forward and will modify plans, as needed. Completing a health symptoms questionnaire, temperature check, and masks will be required for entry. Social distancing measures will be in place.

### 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, June 2 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- **Lansing - Delhi Township:** Wednesday, June 9 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- **East Lansing - Meridian Township:** Wednesday, June 16 from 9 to 10 a.m.

### STAY CONNECTED. STAY SOCIAL.

 [facebook.com/LansingChamber](https://facebook.com/LansingChamber)

 [twitter.com/LansingChamber](https://twitter.com/LansingChamber)

 [@LansingRegionalChamber](https://www.instagram.com/LansingRegionalChamber)

 [Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce](https://www.linkedin.com/company/LansingRegionalChamber)

## THANK YOU RENEWING MEMBERS

Abraham & Gaffney, P.C.  
Access BIDCO, LLC  
Adams Outdoor Advertising  
The Apothecary Shop  
Big Brothers Big Sisters  
Blohm Creative Partners  
Brogan, Reed, Van Gorder & Associates - Ohio National Financial  
Buffalo Wild Wings  
CBRE, Inc.  
County Road Association of Michigan  
Day Family Dental  
DeBruin Law, PLLC  
Douglas J Companies  
DRH Enterprises, LLC-Crestcom  
First Property Holdings, LLC  
Foster Swift Collins & Smith, P.C.  
GM Lansing Operations  
Grabel & Associates  
Harrison Roadhouse  
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Lowery Underground Service, LLC  
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MBH Trucking, LLC  
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Michigan Princess Riverboat

Mid-Michigan Mechanical Contractors Association  
On Target Living  
Piper & Gold Public Relations  
PK Companies  
PM Environmental, Inc.  
Pro-Tech Mechanical  
PTD Technology  
Public Policy Associates, Inc.  
Rathbun Agency  
Riverwalk Theatre  
Robert Half International  
SET SEG  
Simplified Accounting & Tax Service, Inc.  
Sparrow Health System  
Thrun Law Firm, P.C.  
Truscott Rossman  
Young Chevrolet Cadillac

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

### Dimondale Business Association

(517) 449-0501  
[dimondale.org](http://dimondale.org)  
211 N. Bridge St.  
P.O. Box 202  
Dimondale, MI 48821

### Total Spectrum Care

(844) 263-1613  
[www.totalspectrumcare.com](http://www.totalspectrumcare.com)  
6225 Smith Ave.  
Suite 100/1A  
Baltimore, MD 21209

### Provision Living

(248) 897-5270  
[www.provisionliving.com/provision-living-east-lansing](http://www.provisionliving.com/provision-living-east-lansing)  
6290 Abbot Road  
East Lansing, MI 48823

### MAK Motors LLC

(810) 516-1596  
1926 W. Saginaw St.  
Lansing, MI 48915

### Right at Home of Central Michigan

(810) 225-4724  
[www.rahmidmi.com](http://www.rahmidmi.com)  
325 E. Grand River Ave., Suite 317  
East Lansing, MI 48823

### Lansing Symphony Orchestra

(517) 487-5001  
[www.lansingsymphony.org](http://www.lansingsymphony.org)  
104 S. Washington Square, Suite 300  
Lansing, MI 48933

### Pinnacle Recovery Services

(517) 721-1004  
3812 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Lansing, MI 48910

### Wing Heaven Sports Haven

(517) 721-1004  
3812 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Lansing, MI 48910

### Midwest Enviro Solutions

(734) 915-0066  
[www.midwestenvirosolutions.com](http://www.midwestenvirosolutions.com)  
501 Territorial Road  
Manchester, MI 48158

### Chick-Fil-A Okemos

(517) 347-0288  
[www.chick-fil-a.com](http://www.chick-fil-a.com)  
2075 W Grand River Ave.  
Okemos, MI 48864

### Chick-fil-A Lansing

(517) 321-7800  
[cfalansing.com](http://cfalansing.com)  
5617 W. Saginaw Hwy.  
Lansing, MI 48917

### bioPURE Lansing

(517) 888-4726  
[Biopureservice.com](http://Biopureservice.com)  
2555 Kinneville Road  
Leslie, MI 49251-9715

### Cricket Wireless

(517) 721-1047  
[www.cricketwireless.com](http://www.cricketwireless.com)  
4929 S. Cedar St.  
Lansing, MI 48910

### GPS Group LLC

(616) 209-9196  
P.O. Box 4923  
East Lansing, MI 48826

## CHAMBER MILESTONES

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

**Foster Swift  
Collins & Smith,  
P.C.**

45 Years

**Cameron Tool  
Corporation**

15 Years

**Kia of Lansing**

15 Years

**Dakota  
Integrated  
Systems, LLC**

10 Years

**Michigan Certified  
Development  
Corporation  
(MCDC)**

10 Years

**Fishbeck**

5 Years

**Keller Williams -  
Renee Dwyer**

5 Years

**Michigan Company  
Incorporated**

5 Years

**Thatch Computer  
Consulting**

5 Years

Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (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](http://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.





# Capital Area District Library: A Wealth of Business Resources

If you are thinking about starting or expanding a business, sharpening your skillset, or perhaps developing a more targeted, strategic, marketing strategy, there are a wealth of resources available to help you in a place you may not think about – the Capital Area District Library (CADL).



Goodrich

“The general public often doesn’t think of a library as a business resource,” said Jessica Goodrich, library of things and business outreach librarian, CADL. “But, when people think about starting a business, the library is one of the first places they come to start to investigate.”

CADL has an amazing array of business resources that can help, no matter what aspect of business you want to research. One website that provides a depth of learning material is LinkedIn Learning (formally Lynda.com). The site offers professionally produced videos that are much more sophisticated than YouTube, teaching you how to up your skills, including just about any skill set needed to work with computers, including Microsoft Office, Photoshop, and QuickBooks. There are videos on things like photography, project management, and marketing a small business that CADL members can access simply by using their library card.

Reference Solutions is another resource that is akin to the largest phone book you have ever seen. The resource allows you to use filters based on what industry you are researching, who owns the business, or breakout ownership by gender.

“One of the things we have done for some non-profits is to pull a list of all the woman-owned businesses in Ingham County,” said Goodrich. “You can also segment certain geographic areas you want to target so you can do a postcard mailing and reduce costs for mailing lists.”

DemographicsNow is a resource that is much easier to navigate than going to the U.S. Census Bureau website. You can define demographics by just about any kind of geography you want to target, including metro areas, neighborhoods, or school districts.

CADL has also had a partnership with Google through which several classes are available. You can learn how to get your business listed on Google Maps.

“If you have a physical location, you can claim your business profile which is that thing that shows up in the right-hand column

on Google search or when you click on a business on the map,” said Goodrich. “That way, you can make sure you have the right hours out there, the right website, and even post small updates to your Google business profile.”

E-Commerce classes are available to teach people how to use Shopify, which goes through how to start an e-commerce site on the Shopify platform. Through the CADL Library of Things platform, businesses can access things like Wacom tablets for graphic design, GoPro cameras, and lightboxes. CADL also recently added Chromebooks and iPads to their wealth of resources.

For more information about business resources at CADL, go to **Capital Area District Library** ([cadl.org](http://cadl.org)) or call (517) 367-6300. ■



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**\*Ranked #1 in Member Satisfaction among Commercial Health Plans in Michigan.**



For J.D. Power 2020 award information, visit [jdpower.com/awards](http://jdpower.com/awards).  
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# Thank You, Superintendent Sam Sinicropi

**S**uperintendent Sam Sinicropi is retiring for the final time, and his friends and family wish him the best after working for more than 51 years – most of the time in the Lansing School District.

“People talk about the ‘good old days,’ but looking back over all those years, I leave knowing the instruction we deliver to students is better today than ever before,” said Sinicropi. “I love people, and I sincerely have enjoyed working with students, parents, teachers, and staff.”

Sam Sinicropi began working as interim superintendent in January 2020. Still, after six months, the Board of Education named him superintendent while searching for a new superintendent was pending over the past year.

Sinicropi has been a veteran administrator in the Lansing School District for many years and has been a leader through a challenging, traumatic COVID 19 pandemic, which forced classes to move online.



Sam Sinicropi graduated from Everett High School in 1968, earned an associate degree from Lansing Community College, and later earned an undergraduate and graduate degree from Michigan State University.

Sam Sinicropi began his career with the Lansing School District as a custodian receiving support and encouragement from teachers and principals. Sinicropi studied elementary education and became a teacher in 1974. After teaching for several years, Sam moved into administration and held numerous executive positions including principal, assistant director of human resources, director of secondary education in charge of all high schools and middle schools, and area director responsible for all administration aspects for all eastside Lansing schools.

Sinicropi left the Lansing School District to become the superintendent of Saline Area Schools for nearly four years until his first retirement. Sam later came out of retirement and returned to the Lansing School District to serve as assistant superintendent of operations and chief financial officer.

“I have always been open and welcoming to advice, and over time I’ve tried to always make decisions that are in the best interest of our students,” said Sinicropi. “Lansing is a great city to live in and grow, and we need to give our students the best world-class education possible. I may be retiring again, but I’ll be around, and I’m only a phone call away if anyone needs help.”

Four generations of Sinicropis have been part of the Lansing School District family including Sam’s mother Lynn Sawyer Sinicropi who graduated from J.W. Sexton High in 1949, and Sam who graduated from Everett in 1968. Sam’s sons Greg (1992) and Nick (1994) both graduated from Eastern High, granddaughter Mia will graduate from Everett in 2022 along with step-grandson Noah White, and grandson Jack, who is on track to graduate from Everett is 2024.

“Sam has been a perfect partner to me and the board,” said Gabrielle Lawrence, president of the Lansing Board of Education. “When leadership changes, it is very hard on any organization, but I don’t know how the transition could have been smoother because everyone knows and respects Sam Sinicropi. We have delivered a high quality of education to Lansing students, thanks largely to Sam’s hard work during difficult times. We are incredibly lucky to have Sam guide us for so long, and I know he will enjoy retirement in the city he loves. Thank you, Sam Sinicropi, for your service to Lansing!”

“Sam Sinicropi’s years of experience and professionalism were exactly what the Lansing Schools have needed to meet the challenges of the past year,” said Tim

Daman, president and CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. “His poise and wisdom have provided steady leadership for school district staff, parents, and students.”

“I want to be remembered as someone who loved our students, loved the city and did my best to work together with others to make our community better,” said Sinicropi. ■



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*Bill Manns, President & CEO,  
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# County Road Association: Committed to Downtown Lansing

For 103 years, the County Road Association of Michigan (CRA) has been helping the 83 county road agencies in the state promote and maintain a safe, efficient county road and bridge system, including stewardship of the county road right-of-way in rural and urban Michigan.

CRA and the road agency-affiliated workers compensation fund CRASIF, recently decided to move from its former space on Seymour Street in Lansing to the heart of the downtown. One year ago, the CRA moved into a new headquarters at 101 S. Washington Square.



“We wanted to have a higher profile in the legislative dialogue, so we made the move to what we call the ‘legislative corridor,’” said Denise Donohue, executive director, CRA. “We are at the corner of Michigan and Washington, which is the intersection of where things happen for transportation policy.”

The Covid-19 pandemic brought an interesting twist for the CRA. In March of 2020, CRA had its highway conference at the Lansing Center, which turned out to be one of the last large conferences in Michigan in 2020.

“While we were meeting at the end of the second day, is when Michigan announced its first two positive cases,” said Donohue. “None of us realized what was coming. We came away from that conference with 1,200 people and no illnesses, thankfully.”

The Covid-19 pandemic did delay the CRA’s planned move to the new headquarters until May 1. Donohue notes that downtown Lansing hasn’t been quite the same since the Covid-19 outbreak, but is hopeful that more people will recognize the importance of returning to traditional office space and helping create a rebound for the downtown district.

CRA’s new headquarters creates what Donohue calls an industrial vibe that is consistent with the look and feel of a road commission which consists of large garages and road equipment. The space features stone walls, county road signs, conference room carpet that looks like tire tracks with yellow striping. The facility includes state-of-the-art television and video conferencing equipment. Each team member has a private office with glass doors and all the needed safety protection dictated by the Covid pandemic.

CRA is at the heart of the long-running policy debate over infrastructure funding in Michigan. The state is in the fifth and final year of the 2015 \$1.2 billion transportation funding package.

“When the bill was signed, everyone felt that was a good first step,” said Donohue. “The governor and the legislature seemed committed to finishing the job that started in 2015.”

Donohue is pleased the state resisted the temptation to reduce its infrastructure commitment to fill a \$600 million gap created by the Covid pandemic. She is also encouraged by the tenor of discussions towards a fix for Michigan’s bridge system.

“We’ve got a serious bridge problem apart from the potholes on the roads,” said Donohue. “We still have a one-billion-dollar problem with our local bridges.”

Whatever the final infrastructure solution looks like, CRA is in the perfect location to be in the thick of the action representing its member’s agencies across the state of Michigan. ■

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# Origami Rehabilitation Expanding, Two Locations to Better Serve the Community

**O**rigami Rehabilitation, formerly Origami Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center, recently launched a rebrand including a new name, Origami Rehabilitation, and a new logo. In addition to their rebrand, they also announced the opening of a satellite location in Lansing.

Origami provides comprehensive rehabilitation for children, adolescents, and adults with neurological, developmental, mental health, and orthopedic conditions through their residential and outpatient programs.

Origami's second location, Origami West, is located at 137 S. Marketplace Blvd. Lansing, MI 48917 and opened June 1, 2021. Origami West offers the same outpatient services available at their current Mason location, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, psychiatry, psychology, vocational services, and more.

Origami's vision is to maximize access to innovative services with exceptional results. The opening of this satellite location allows Origami to realize its vision and continue to serve more individuals in need. Origami West is conveniently located on Lansing's west side, making their services more accessible to the Lansing, Grand Ledge, Dewitt, Charlotte, Portland, and Pottsville communities.

Origami continues to expand its continuum of care, adding more professional and specialty services to better serve those in need. Two newer services available at Origami include driver rehabilitation and pelvic health. Origami is also reaching more community members by further broadening its services to children and adolescents.

In addition to a state-of-the-art therapy gym and driver rehabilitation vehicles, Origami's satellite location features a designated pediatrics space equipped with a rock wall and all the tools needed to help their youngest clients achieve their goals.



Origami has been creating opportunities and transforming lives since opening in 1997 due to a unique partnership between Peckham, Inc. and Michigan State

University College of Osteopathic Medicine, both of which remain proud partners of Origami. Origami started as a small residential program specializing in serving adults with traumatic brain injury and has gradually expanded to become a unique multi-dimensional continuum of care that now serves children, adolescents, and adults with neurological, developmental, mental health, and orthopedic conditions.

Origami's President & CEO, Tammy Hannah, said, "We never want to turn someone away who needs our services. Our new satellite location allows us to expand our capacity and serve more individuals and families in our community and beyond. 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 will celebrate the opening of their second location with a ribbon-cutting later this summer. More information on this event will be available by visiting [OrigamiRehab.org/news-and-events](https://OrigamiRehab.org/news-and-events). Origami is currently accepting referrals at both locations. Anyone may submit a referral to Origami. To learn more about the programs and services available at their Mason and Lansing locations or submit a referral, call (517) 336-6060 or visit [OrigamiRehab.org](https://OrigamiRehab.org). ■



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# Safely Navigating the Covid Crisis

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce 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 six organizations that excelled in safety in coping with the Covid pandemic: **Michigrain Distillery, Michigan Princess, The Northfork Estate, The Plant Professionals, Doberman Technologies** and **Dr. Susan Maples, DDS.**



## Michigrain Distillery

Michigrain Distillery is truly a one-of-a-kind distillery. Their spirits are distilled with obsessive attention to quality and detail. They utilize techniques that have been used for 650 years combined with cutting-edge science to deliver spirits that leave an impression. By partnering with local farmers in and around the community to supply their state-of-the-art facility with an endless bounty of premium grain, MichiGrain completely redefines what neutral grain spirits can provide to the increased demands of the rapidly growing craft spirits industry.

Michigrain was proud to step up during the pandemic and produce much-needed hand sanitizer.

"It started early in the pandemic when we heard there was a shortage of hand sanitizer, said Scott Ellis, who serves as Michigrain CEO and co-owns with his partner Mike Bird. "I was at my son's school, and they were talking about making homemade versions of hand sanitizer. My partner jumped on board and we started to figure it out."

Michigrain started by selling hand sanitizer using ethanol to make their vodka and baby oil. When it became apparent the pandemic would last longer than we all thought, Michigrain researched federal rules and began to produce FDA-approved hand sanitizer.

"We switched gears 100 percent and began making sanitizer for local police and fire departments and many other places," said Ellis.

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

Ellis says because the company was able to pivot and produce sanitizer, they have now been able to shift and keep their company going and sell bulk ethanol, which has been in demand around the country due to an ethanol shortage.

Whether you're looking for an unpackaged spirit for your distribution or venue or want to enjoy a pour in their tasting room, Michigrain has a handcrafted spirit that will meet your tastes. For more information, visit [michigrain.net](http://michigrain.net).



## Michigan Princess

Michigan Princess Riverboat is in the business of creating unforgettable memories for their passengers. Their four-boat fleet includes the Michigan Princess, Grand Princess, Little Traverse Bay Ferry, and the Detroit Princess.

"From the friendly crew to the top-notch food and beverage options, the Michigan Princess is the best way to experience the Grand River up close, said current owner and operator Chris Chamberlain.

Michigan Princess is family-owned, focusing on family-centered events including; weddings, proms, graduation parties, anniversary/family reunion events, Fall Color Tours, and Murder Mystery Cruises.

The company was forced to not operate its boats in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Chamberlain and his team had to decide how to keep the company afloat with the business shuttered for the year. A new company was created, MI Medical Supply, that made hand sanitizer. The products are available at COSTCO and all over the Midwest.



Michigan Princess has also made numerous Covid-19 related renovations including, renovated windows to improve ventilation, passenger safety, and hosting outdoor gatherings of 375 people. The team at Michigan princess is working closely with the Ingham County Health Department to implement all safety precautions.

This year, Michigan Princess celebrates its 30th anniversary and is reopening in June for cruises along a picturesque route.

“The Michigan Princess departs from Grand River Park and cruises along the scenic Grand River due west to the location of the former Waverly Leadley Amusement Park now a private subdivision,” said Chamberlain. “Once we reach the Waverly Road bridge, we swing around and head downstream along Moores River Drive past Francis Park and the governor’s estate to Riverside Park. From there, we cruise back toward dock passing, the Lansing Country Club and the MSU crew team facilities along the way.”

To purchase tickets on the Michigan Princess, visit [michiganprincess.com](http://michiganprincess.com).



### The Northfork Estate

Sitting on 50 beautiful acres, just 30 minutes south of Lansing near Eaton Rapids, The Northfork Estate offers the one-of-a-kind venue to plan any gala or celebration. With private ponds, majestic landscaping, winding road and natural meadows, The Northfork Estate awaits your wedding or event. We are a full-service venue with a pavilion and patio nestled in the picturesque setting.

2020 was a challenging year for the event business, including The Northfork Estate. Most of Northfork’s business involves large weddings, which were greatly impacted as a result of the pandemic. The Northfork team found that the brides and grooms with whom they had been working were very flexible about their headcount or changing their dates.

“We all wanted to produce experiences that were both memorable and safe, said Marta Brown, who owns Northfork. “The team implemented a program that included disinfectants, PPE stations, sneeze guards, and managed to do so in a manner that didn’t take away from what the brides and grooms had been planning for decorations.”

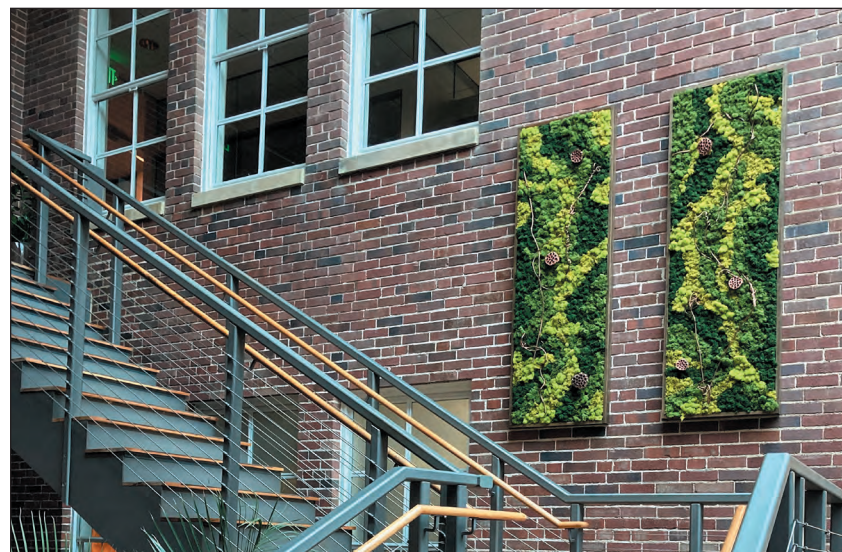
The Northfork team also reached out to businesses who shared their desire to continue to hold events and do so safely.

“We also added a wonderful outside pergola, which was a great addition to our venue in general, and it was helpful to be able to have outdoor events,” said Brown.

The Northfork Estate has all its new policies and procedures and is looking forward to a robust wedding and event business in 2021.

“Our staff here is fantastic,” said Brown. “I am very optimistic we will continue to create an oasis for couples, guests, and families to come out, enjoy the day, and be safe.”

For more information about The Northfork Estate, visit [thenorthforkestate.com](http://thenorthforkestate.com).



### The Plant Professionals

The Plant Professionals began in 1979 as a one-person operation selling tropical indoor plants in baskets to businesses. The business grew, offerings increased, and the reputation for knowledgeable and dependable service at fair prices developed. Flowering plants were added, and then plant event rentals and holiday decorating. The Plant Professionals also offers commercial and residential services for indoor plantscaping, plant rentals, landscaping, floral design, garden services, outdoor color services, and green walls.

Like most businesses, The Plant Professionals went from wondering how Covid would affect them to scrambling to figure out what they would be allowed to do safely to protect both their clients and staff.

“We quickly learned that we would be delayed with starting up landscaping,” said Kathy Valentine, owner, The Plant Professionals. “We could care for indoor plants and needed to take care of those plants for our customers.”

With the indoor staff at Plant Professionals laid off for their safety, Kathy, partner Al Marrero, and three-part timers serviced the customers for several weeks. By May, some of the staff returned to work to service the landscaping portion of the business.

Some of the biggest challenges for small businesses, including The Plant Professionals were learning all there was to know about loans, grants, PPE equipment, ensuring safety for all of their team members, and setting up new processes to accomplish that. Valentine praises the Lansing Regional Chamber, other small business owners, and county health departments who worked together to provide the information needed.

“I am so grateful to be in Lansing, Michigan, doing business and to have such a wonderful partner and staff,” said Valentine.

The work of The Plant Professionals team has served clients at many prestigious companies and locations throughout the region. For more information, visit [theplantprofessionals.com](http://theplantprofessionals.com).



# Safely Navigating the Covid Crisis



## Doberman Technologies

Doberman is an IT company that helps you grow your business and reduce your risk. Doberman understands that you want to lead your business through growth while remaining profitable and able to deliver on your promises to customers, employees, and your community. Doberman works with their clients to develop a plan for their technology, focused on goal achievement and growth, while balancing the needs of both security and accessibility of IT systems.

During the Covid pandemic, Doberman has been focusing on how to help their clients weather the storm.

“Whether it’s healthcare and shifting to tele-med, construction tracking Covid-19 protocols on job sites or lawyers with Zoom meetings with their clients,” said Ian Richardson, CEO and founder, Doberman Technologies. “Tech has that capability to make things just a little bit easier in a decidedly difficult world.”

In addition to focusing on keeping their clients and employees safe during the pandemic, Doberman has also maintained focus on the cybersecurity front. In many respects, much of the shifting that has occurred has fallen into patterns with which the Doberman team was already familiar.

“Our business has always been around remote support, which is faster and easier for everyone,” said Richardson. “Our clients are pretty cutting edge, so adapting to things like Microsoft Teams and Zoom in their day-to-day operations wasn’t a big ground-shaking change.”

The Doberman team has made sure to increase the number of customer calls they are making to make certain things are on track and identify changes that can help the clients continue to navigate the challenges successfully.

“What’s most striking to me is the relentless positivity throughout Lansing,” said Richardson. “I am proud to call Lansing our home and have every faith in our future. Always forward, Lansing.”

For more information about Doberman Technologies, visit [www.doberman.net](http://www.doberman.net).



## Susan Maples, DDS, MSBA

Dr. Susan Maples is a dentist, author and health educator who leads a cradle-to-grave Total Health Dental Practice in Holt Michigan. Her passion is guiding her patients toward health, energy and happiness from infancy to elderly. Dr. Susan strives to bridge the perceived gap between oral health and total body health. Her passion is to help prevent all disease—oral and systemic—and help each individual move toward their own concepts of optimal health.

Dr. Susan and her team feel they can accomplish this by building health-enhancing relationships and friendships with each person within their reach. Her team members are committed to continual learning. Each and every one of them brings a strong personal commitment to their work. Furthermore, by making a significant difference in the lives of others, they come to know themselves better.

The profession of dentistry has always been committed to creating safe environments for the clinical team and patients. And regarding the COVID pandemic, this dental team went above and beyond, surrounded the challenges from every perspective.

“The ability of our team to stay laser-focused on the mission –to help each patient, each visit, take one step further towards optimal health, carried us through it all” said Dr. Maples. “Right now, when improving our health is a cultural challenge, our mission has become even more important.”

Dr Maples says the team’s approach to total health has helped combat COVID, along with many other preventable devastating illnesses. In the mouth, Periodontal (gum) disease, Caries (cavity) disease, Occlusal (grinding) disease, and Oral-pharyngeal cancer are all on the rise. And all of these negatively affect other organs in the body.

The threat of the COVID virus has, in some ways, helped Dr Susan’s team engage in meaningful dialogues with their patients about what they really want to achieve, for their best future self and their ultimately their immunity. To learn more about Susan Maples, DDS and their services, visit [drsusanmaples.com](http://drsusanmaples.com). ■

## Saving the Family Cottage



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# Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Supports Michigan's Businesses and Members During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic forced everyone to change the way they lived and worked. There was a massive deployment of resources in the health care community to test and treat those at risk or afflicted. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network stepped up to help Michigan's businesses, families, and communities just as it has done for the past 81 years. This included advising customers on the impact to health care services and advocating for community-based interventions to help people cope with disruption to their lives and livelihoods. Blue Cross got to work, directing COVID-19 response and actions to support members, customers, provider partners, and employees.



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

Some steps Blue Cross took during the pandemic included:

- Participated in Michigan's Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities to help address inequities related to COVID-19 outcomes.
- Put nearly \$1.3 billion behind our total COVID-19 response.

- Returned more than \$115 million to members for medical, dental, and vision plan premiums.
- Delivered additional premium credits for small group customers, representing a 30% premium credit for one month.
- Extended premium payment grace periods and offered premium deferral payment plans to help group customers make their premium payments and retain coverage for employees.
- Established a small group helpline in support of small business customers and their employees.
- Relaxed underwriting guidelines for furloughed employees, so coverage was not dropped.
- Waived waiting periods for open enrollment, new hire, and reinstatement policies to ensure immediate access to health care.
- Waived member copayments, deductibles, and coinsurance for COVID-19 testing and treatment.

Blue Cross remains committed to helping its customers, members, and providers navigate through uncertain times. For more information on Blue Cross's response to the pandemic and other initiatives related to COVID-19, go to [bcbsm.com/coronavirus](https://bcbsm.com/coronavirus). ■

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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.**  
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# Lansing Regional Chamber Announces Annual Dinner Award Recipients

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) has announced the recipients of three major awards, which will be presented at the LRCC's upcoming Annual Dinner on Thursday, June 10.

## The 2020 award recipients include:

- Joan Nelson, Allen Neighborhood Center, Community Service Award
- Public Sector Consultants, Outstanding Small Business Award
- Quality Dairy, Legacy Award

## Community Service Award Recipient Joan Nelson, Allen Neighborhood Center

Joan Nelson, co-founder and executive director of the Allen Neighborhood Center (ANC) has been named the LRCC Community Service Award recipient. Nelson has been instrumental in guiding ANC's growth as a dynamic hub where Lansing's Eastside neighbors access resources to improve their health and well-being. ANC programs are focused on health, food security/access, youth development, entrepreneurship and job skill training, commercial corridor revitalization, and neighborhood capacity-building.



Nelson

"We say we are neighborhood-crafted and neighborhood driven," said Nelson. "ANC has 10 paid staff, several AmeriCorp and VISTA workers, about 15 interns, and pre-Covid, between 400-500 volunteers each year. Our volunteers from the neighborhood, MSU, and LCC make all things possible."

Just as important, according to Nelson, has been the institutional support ANC has received from a multitude of backers, including the Ingham County Health Department, Board of Water and Light, Consumers Energy Foundation, City of Lansing, United Way, Capital Region Community Foundation, Capital Area Housing Project, PNC, MEDC, MDARD, EGLE, LEAP, MI Community Capital, and several other foundations.

"We have always seen our role as one of mediating between the residents of the Eastside and a whole array of resource holders," said Nelson.

ANC's biggest project yet is Allen Place, an \$11 million mixed-use development backed by



**ALLEN**  
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Cinnaire and other supporters. When completed this fall, Allen Place will offer 21 units of mixed-income apartments and several new commercial entities, with a decided focus on food and health. One of the new entities will be a health clinic, one of the networks of Federally Qualified Health Clinics, operated by Ingham County Health Centers. It will provide clinical services to low-to-moderate income families, special outreach to refugees and a focus on vaccines and vaccine education. In addition, Eastside Lansing Food Co-Op will be opening a consignment grocery, specializing in locally grown produce and food products.

The Allen Place Project brings health, food, and housing-related programs

and services into the heart of Lansing's lower Eastside," said Nelson. "It is made possible only as a result of our partnership with Cinnaire Solutions and many generous grants and donations from foundations, government, and private benefactors."

The Allen Place Project will also feature the Accelerator Kitchen, which will provide the next step for food entrepreneurs coming through ANC's six-year-old incubator program.

Joan Nelson has been active on many other fronts in the community during her career, including owner of Movement Arts Studio, facilitator of Eastside Healthy Community Summit, board member, Council Against Domestic Assault, and co-chair of the Power of We Consortium. Her first job out of college was working as a community organizer with Lansing Model Cities, part of Lyndon Johnson's urban anti-poverty program.

"I still find engaging with people in creative assessment, planning, and implementation of strategies to improve quality of life to be uniquely rewarding," said Nelson. "Working as a change agent on Lansing's Eastside is so easy in this lively, connected, and progressive community."

## Public Sector Consultants Named Outstanding Small Business



Kuntzsch and Bennett

Public Sector Consultants (PSC), a non-partisan public policy consulting firm has been named the LRCC's Outstanding Small Business Award recipient.

PSC is a certified women-owned small business that has served hundreds of government agencies, nonprofits, associations, regulated industries in its more than 40-year history. CEO Julie Metty Bennett attributes much of the firm's success to team members' passion for the PSC mission to improve the

quality of life for the people of Michigan and beyond.

“That’s why everyone at PSC gets up and goes to work in the morning,” said Metty Bennett, who co-owns the firm with President Rachel Kuntzsch. “It is not a job. It is more of a calling to have a positive impact on people’s lives.”

The COVID pandemic forced PSC to make many difficult decisions on how to operate and maintain the camaraderie and culture.

“We have a real connection and trust among our staff,” said Kuntzsch. “Maintaining those relationships was critical to serving our clients who needed us more than ever. We also wanted to help each other as we dealt with challenges personally and tried to keep some balance in our lives.”



The PSC staff had been through several trials in the years before COVID, which taught the team valuable lessons in adaptability and resilience. Metty Bennett and Kuntzsch say those experiences helped prepare them for the challenges brought on by the Covid pandemic.

PSC leadership has a people-first, servant leadership philosophy. The firm’s mission is centered around improving people’s lives which is also an emphasis internally.

“We give our people the space to follow their passion and stay curious,” said Metty Bennett. “We don’t simply have boxes on an organizational chart that we are filling. We have super smart, and passionate people and we give them the liberty to express themselves and impact. That fuels the amazing work we do for clients.”

Metty Bennett and Kuntzsch are the first women owners in PSC’s distinguished history, which they say first and foremost should honor the women on whose shoulders they are standing.

“Women face a unique set of obstacles in business and in leadership roles that shape who we are,” said Metty Bennett. “We bring those unique skill sets and perspectives to the work, which I think has a great value, especially in public policy work.”

Kuntzsch merged her competing firm with PSC five years ago, which she says came from a recognition they could be stronger together.

“Women often have a scarcity mindset around leadership potential and end up creating a culture of competition,” said Kuntzsch. “We just decided that’s not how we roll.”

PSC has also placed a strong emphasis on serving the community. Firm leaders serve on the LRCC diversity, equity and inclusion committee, the LEAP board of directors, and the LEAP mentorship and entrepreneurship programs. Team members donate hours and funds to local initiatives, boards, and community service projects, including the river clean-up, blood drives, and numerous other activities during the year.

## Chamber Legacy Award Quality Dairy Celebrates 85 Years

For 85 years, Quality Dairy (QD) has been an iconic brand in the Greater Lansing region. QD was founded in 1936 by Gregory J and Pauline

Martin, and Harvey and Mildred Mack for an initial investment of \$600. What started as a single, small facility in the 1400 block of South Washington in Lansing has grown into a 28-store chain of convenience stores throughout Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties.



Martin

QD has always been a company of innovation. Eighty-five years ago, milk was primarily delivered to homes by a milkman. QD introduced the concept of “Today’s Milk Today.” Bottles were filled with milk daily, and customers could pick up at their convenience. Over the years, QD has introduced their famous eggnog and ice cream products, QD Classic French onion chip dip, cider and fresh bakery goods, including their renowned paczki! In addition to their quality products and service, Quality Dairy is one of the region’s largest employers and a mainstay of the local economy.

“We are a neighborhood-based organization and one of the few that remains family-owned,” said Ken Martin, president & CEO of Quality Dairy. I am fortunate to have the guidance of my partners Alan and Paul Martin. Jeff Schook, Trevor Rutan, and Laurie Stewart QD’s executive management team are being supported by the third generation of the family, including Ken’s son Jesse and Alan’s son Joe Martin.

QD continues to innovate on many levels. In 2019, the company launched a modernization program for its stores. The Holt location reopened as the new flagship store, showcasing the future of all QD stores. The Holt store features a drive-thru window, ice-cold beer cave, state-of-the-art kitchen, high-end self-serve cappuccino machine, extensive ice cream topping bar, outdoor patio as well as indoor seating, & HD digital video signage.



Covid changed QDs priorities in the past year. The company immediately started making its own hand sanitizer. Martin and his team recognized that as a community-based store, it was imperative they remained open.

“We knew we had to be there,” said Martin. “I can’t speak highly enough of the entire QD team and how they were able to answer the call.”

Before Covid, QD had developed an impressive plan for upgrading its stores. The pandemic slowed that plan, but the company still managed to implement several upgrades, including total merchandise resets, rollout of the new QD App, and an improved QD rewards program. QD also rebranded seven of their fuel sites from unbranded fuel to Exxon Mobil, including updating the canopies and graphics, new pumps, and new point-of-sale equipment. QD has also upgraded facades at three stores, testing out a new look.

Though the times have changed, Quality Dairy’s commitment as a family-owned business focused on serving families in their communities remains intact. QD remains true to its mission to work as a team, to increase customer recognition, support, and trust.

“I think if we do those four things, we will build a stronger QD,” said Martin. ■



# Lansing Regional Chamber Job Board to Help Region's Employers Connect with Job Seekers

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) has launched a new online job board that LRCC members can use to share their job openings with those seeking employment. The Member Job Board is located on the LRCC website under the Talent tab and can be accessed at [members.lansingchamber.org/jobs](https://members.lansingchamber.org/jobs).

"For years, our members have told us that the availability of talent is the number one concern they have in trying to grow their business," said Steve Japinga, vice president public affairs, LRCC. "The Lansing Regional Chamber has developed several key initiatives around talent, including Leadership Lansing. The job board is the logical next step in helping our members attract and retain the best talent possible."

The Member Job Board is also part of a regional strategy around talent attraction and retention. LRCC has joined with LEAP and 10 other regional partners to

create the first State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report, which compares Lansing's competitiveness to 11 peer regions around the country. One of the key findings in the report is the need for the region to increase growth in the labor force. The full State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report was released on May 4.

"There is no question that our efforts to grow the labor force over the next decade will be key to our regional vitality," said Japinga. "The Member Job Board will help our members and the region communicate that we have the jobs available in a diverse group of industries."

Only LRCC members will be allowed to add jobs to the website. However, the landing page will be available to the public. Therefore, people outside the organization will also be aware of and be able to view open positions. ■

## Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Receives 2021 PACE Award for Crisis Communications Campaign

### RELAUNCH GREATER LANSING INITIATIVE ALSO RECEIVES COVETED PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

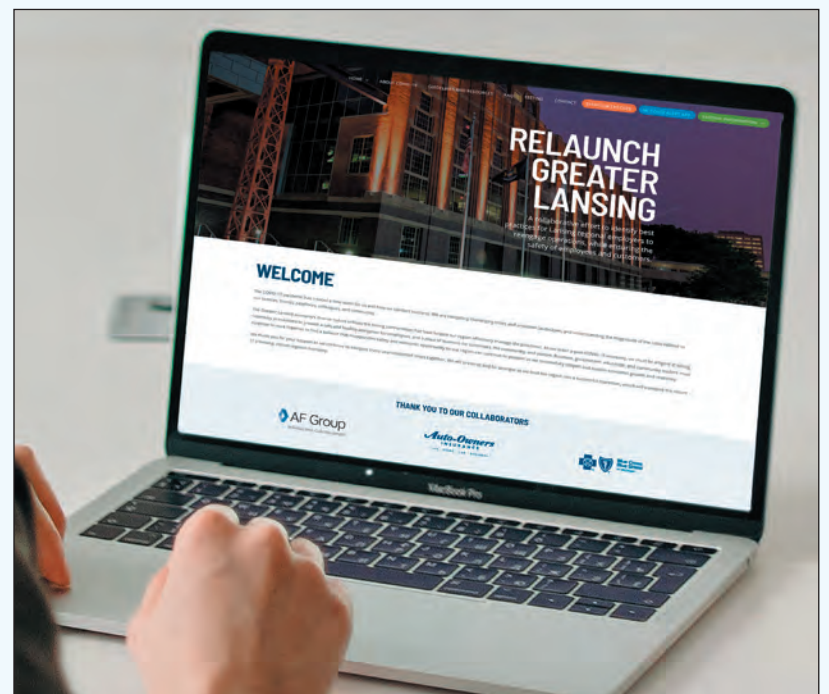
The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce received the Achievement Award for its crisis communications campaign, the RELAUNCH Greater Lansing: Economic Rehabilitation Task Force, Thursday, May 13, during the 2021 Central Michigan Public Relations Society of America (CMPRSA) PACE Awards. The campaign also won the coveted People's Choice Award, which was voted on by the public.

"This task force was carefully and strategically assembled to guide as we determine the best, most effective way to move forward and lead the region into a successful transition," said Steve Japinga, vice president of public affairs, LRCC. "These recognitions of its efforts demonstrate how important it is for business, government, healthcare and education sectors to work together."

The RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force was created in early 2020 in conjunction with Governor Gretchen Whitmer's MI Safe Start Plan, which focused on re-engaging Michigan's economy by a regional, phased-in approach. The initiative has brought together trusted and prominent leaders in business, government, healthcare, and education and is guided by the Ingham County Health Officer. The task force's overall goal has been to develop a comprehensive strategy for industries within the Greater Lansing region to navigate the Covid-19 pandemic, provide necessary and timely information and regulatory updates and help reopen businesses safely and successfully.

"We would like to thank our RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force members, collaborators, the Lansing Regional Chamber team, Tandem Studios, Ross Woodstock, and the Lansing region for their work on this important initiative," said Ashley Sandborn, director of marketing and communications, LRCC.

CMPRSA is one of the 100 chapters of the Public Relations Society of



America. Based in New York City, PRSA is the world's largest organization for public relations professionals.

The PACE Awards are mid-Michigan's highest honor of public relations activities. In the judgment of their (out-of-state) peers, they are awarded annually to practitioners who have successfully addressed a contemporary issue with exemplary professional skill, creativity, and resourcefulness. ■



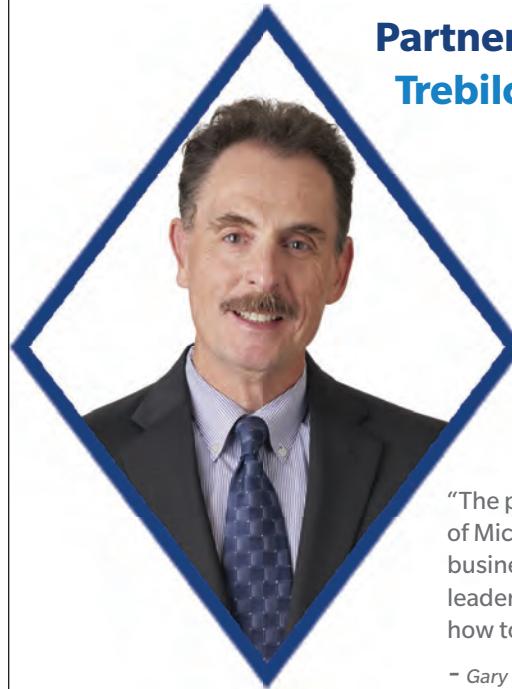


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## GREATER LANSING BATTLES THE TALENT GAP

**T**he battle to attract talent is not a new one for employers in Greater Lansing. For the past several years, members of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) have identified their ability to attract and retain talent as their number one concern. Simply put, there are more jobs than there are people to fill those jobs.

The recently completed State of the Region Report (SOTR), a project spearheaded by the LRCC, LEAP and 10 other business and education partners noted population growth in the Lansing region is very low, compared to 11 thriving peer regions around the country. The population dynamic has increased the challenges regional employers are facing when trying to lure talent.

A strong economy fueled growth which in turn increased the demand for talent further. Then, in the midst of a growing talent gap, Covid-19 happened.

Thousands of workers were sent to the sidelines during the pandemic as their businesses closed or laid off workers due to the slowing economy. Now, as the economy begins to pick up and we begin to return to some sense of normalcy, businesses are having trouble filling jobs, which in turn hurts their ability to keep up with growing demands for their products and services.

### The Covid Impact

In the early days of the pandemic, employers who were hiring had to shift to a remote process of finding and interviewing prospective candidates. Covid-19 also created a number of barriers for prospective candidates, which made hiring even more difficult.



Surline

“It’s been a time of great uncertainty and unprecedented, rapid change. First, the question of how long the pandemic would affect business – there was some organizations that thought a few months at most and continued to fill open positions and others who that stopped all hiring and began reducing staff,” said Todd Surline, owner & CEO, Hiring Solutions. “Secondly, many candidates for positions

either withdrew from consideration due to the concerns for safety and unwillingness to take that leap of faith that they must when changing jobs.”

“Many people are uncomfortable returning to the workplace because of the pandemic and want to ensure their workplace will be safe,” said Carrie Rosingana, CEO, Capital Area Michigan Works! “We’re advising our employer partners to let employees know about the policies and procedures that are in place to protect them.”



Rosingana

“It’s clear there are many, many people who remain uncomfortable about COVID in general,” said James Farrell, executive vice president, people, culture and communications, Dart Container Corporation. “We have all the necessary health and safety protocols in place to protect our employees, but that doesn’t quell all the concerns people have about getting COVID or being around it. Additionally, issues around childcare and enhanced governmental support programs have had a dampening impact on the labor market for entry-level manufacturing jobs across the country.”



Farrell

Dart Container has 25 plants around the U.S. including at its corporate headquarters in Mason. Farrell says it has been a huge struggle attracting and retaining entry-level and skilled trades talent in the company’s manufacturing facilities.

“Over the last six to eight months, we had difficulty even attracting candidates, let alone getting them through the process and hiring them,” said Farrell. “We are down nearly 20 percent from where we would like to be in our manufacturing facilities and I don’t see us getting there anytime soon.”

### The Child Care Crisis

The COVID pandemic also brought to the forefront the growing problem of



child care. A recent report from the Michigan Women's Commission stated over 130,000 women have left the workforce and child care is cited as the number one reason. Rosingana says the pandemic has been shining a brighter light on a very significant barrier that needs to be addressed.

"Women who are resorting to becoming the child care provider have been forced to make the decision to leave their careers," said Rosingana. "On top of that, women of color have been more adversely affected with having to leave the workforce in higher numbers."

"There has been a lack of day care options for families, because day care centers can't staff themselves and many of them have closed," said Farrell. "Virtual instead of in-person school requires an adult to be at home with the kids while they attend virtual classes has also been an issue."

This trend has exacerbated the existing skills gaps, reducing the number of people available for work and increasing vacancies for employers. As families look to fall and the increasing possibilities of students returning to classrooms and child care centers, there is hope on the horizon for employers looking to tap into an influx of returning talent, and for individuals looking to return to work, particularly those looking for different workplace options than were available before.

"Child care is an issue that we have to address as an industry," said Scott Ellis, CEO of Lansing-based Michigrair Distillery and executive director, Michigan Licensed Beverage Association. "Whether it is helping find day care for workers or other approaches, we are going to have to get more involved."

Child care challenges were heightened during the pandemic as child care providers saw their costs skyrocket as they scrambled to meet new health requirements while their revenues dropped dramatically as families became unemployed and had young children at home.

"By the end of 2020, 13 percent of child care centers nationwide had closed down for good," said Elisabeth Tobia, CEO, EC3 (Educational Child Care Center). "That has made it harder than ever for families to find the care they need."

The vast number of women who have left the workforce are unable to find the care they need or can afford. The resulting loss of talent in the workforce is having a huge impact on employers and the economy.

"Parents either can't go to work or their work is compromised as they are distracted when they try to work from home," said Tobia. "We know it is creating a huge drag on the economy."

Tobia advises employers to start recognizing childcare not as a service of convenience but rather as an economic imperative.

"Early learning is widely recognized as a key predictor of success later in life; fewer suspensions, less juvenile crime and higher college graduation rates," said Tobia. "Early learning is more crucial than anything that comes after it. The brain development that takes place in those first five years of life will make or break the workforce 20 years from now."



**The pandemic isn't over by any stretch, but employers are beginning to shift their focus to operating in a post Covid environment. The rapidly changing nature of the pandemic has made the only certainty about the future is uncertainty.**



Ellis



Tobia

## Restaurants and the Tourism industry Feeling the Squeeze

No industries have been hit harder during the pandemic than restaurants and the tourism industry. Restaurants were limited to carry out and delivery only for months. Then, capacity limits have hindered their profitability since dining in service became available. Many employees collecting unemployment benefits during their layoff have preferred those benefits instead of returning to work.

"Until the free money is gone, we're not going to get people rushing back to work," said Scott Ellis. "We need people who want to work and the incentive of staying home is not going to help."

Ellis also notes the fact that patrons are not rushing back to restaurants for dine-in service has also hurt due to the fact that tip money for servers used to making \$20-25 per hour is much lower than pre-pandemic levels. Right now, the biggest challenge is getting candidates to show up for interviews.

"I can name numerous places that literally have 20 interviews a day and have 3 people show up," said Ellis. "The other thing is people will show up for a day or two and then quit."

The loss of life and long-standing personal and economic impacts of the pandemic cannot be understated. The challenges brought forth in the past year by COVID-19 have illustrated even more so than before a stark need to address the talent gap. Rosingana predicts many employers will maintain certain elements of the shifts forced upon them by COVID-19.

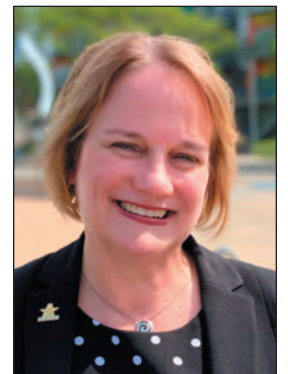
Greater Lansing's \$680 million a year tourism industry has been slashed in half during the past year. Meetings and events were halted during the pandemic and hotel occupancy plummeted. Once Michigan reached the 55% vaccination rate in mid-May, some easing on restrictions began to occur, as meeting venues could hold events at 25% capacity. The first major positive jolt to the tourism economy occurred the second weekend in May with graduation at Michigan State University, which significantly boosted hotel occupancy and restaurant business. The region's sports business is also starting to return, most notably with the hosting of the NCAA Division III women's golf national championship and a major adult softball tournament.

The biggest challenge for employment in the tourism industry has been the fact that the shifting nature of the pandemic caused venues to close, reopen, close and reopen, which caused a lot of talent to leave the industry.

"They wanted to go to a more stable situation," said Julie Pingston, CEO, Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau. "The tourism industry has not been that for the last year-and-a-half."

Pingston says most facilities are hiring now but are unable to find people that can work. The biggest challenges, especially for hotels is that they aren't generating enough revenue to pay people enough to come to work.

"It's a vicious circle," said Pingston. "They need to pay people a higher wage to get them to come in the door to go to work, but they are not getting that same balance on the revenue side which is creating a disconnect."



Pingston

## The Emergence of the Remote Workforce

The shift to working remotely and utilization of technologies like Zoom and Microsoft teams are reshaping thinking about the long-term structure of

# HELP WANTED: GREATER LANSING BATTLES THE TALENT GAP

work across multiple industry sectors. Employers are still trying to sort out how much of their operations can and should be handled by remote workers.

“I think it is going to be a long experiment,” said Farrell. “Nobody knows what the right answer is. It’s a complex situation that leaders of organizations are evaluating intently right now. I think we’re all trying to strike the right balance of optimizing our ability to attract and retain talent while keeping company culture and performance strong. While there’s a range of options, I think most companies are looking at some form of a hybrid onsite/remote model for the future.”

“With nearly every search we do the question comes up whether the position allows for the flexibility of working from home at least part of the time,” said Surline. “People who have done it during the pandemic have modified their work habits and although there are some that don’t like it we see the majority liking it.”

“We were starting to see the trend of remote work in many sectors pre-COVID, particularly in IT,” said Rosingana. “Different sectors are now looking at this and asking how to make this viable, and are continuing to explore remote work as an option for talent going forward. Job seekers, particularly the younger generation are looking for that flexibility. They place a high value on work life balance and

being able to work remotely can address what they are looking for culturally in the workplace.”

An emphasis on working remotely could also become a recruiting advantage for the region as it bids against the rest of the country for outstanding talent. After the recent State of the Region Report pointed to the need for Greater Lansing to grow its population and also grow the size of its private sector, Bob Trezise, CEO of LEAP said that a regional strategy of actively recruiting remote workers could be a competitive advantage. Lansing’s advantage of affordability and minimal traffic hassles combined with the ability to work remotely could be a difference maker.



Trezise

“That plus our big-city entertainment options could be more and more attractive to remote workers,” said Trezise. “People can work for a company in Silicon Valley or Austin, Texas and do it while living in Greater Lansing. Remote workers are going to be a big part of our economic development package.”

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## Transitioning Beyond Covid

The pandemic isn't over by any stretch, but employers are beginning to shift their focus to operating in a post Covid environment. The rapidly changing nature of the pandemic has made the only certainty about the future is uncertainty.

Surline and his Hiring Solutions team are encouraging clients to be patient. Average search time pre-Covid was 60-90 days. Now it is 90-120 days depending on the position. Surline also recommends employers use multiple avenues for seeking applicants; postings, social media, job boards, paid advertisements and employee referrals. Employers also need to be flexible and agile.

"In a relatively brief period, we've gone from very low unemployment to nearly depression level unemployment back down to post recession unemployment," said Surline. "Being able to pivot and move in a different direction very quickly can make all the difference. Plus, no one really knows what's coming next."

In addition, Surline says employers should leverage their value proposition and place a particular emphasis on your culture, which is critically important to today's talent.

One reality the Covid pandemic has made apparent is that the rules of the game have changed and everyone, employers and employees have to adjust to the new way that as yet has not been clearly defined.

"This is not going to end when Covid is over," said Ellis. "We have changed permanently and we need to look at how we operate, how we incentivize employees and the cost of business. The game has changed. We're not going to figure it out overnight. We are going to have to work at this." ■

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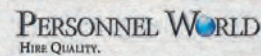
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# Community Foundation to Build First Universally-Accessible Playground in the Region

The Capital Region Community Foundation is building the first universally accessible playground in the region, designed to promote inclusivity and the health and well-being of ALL children. And because the playground will be fully accessible, parents and grandparents who have physical limitations will be able to enjoy playing with their children and grandchildren. This extraordinary \$1.5 million+ playground on the downtown Lansing riverfront will be a destination for families throughout our region and beyond.

This project is important because families in our community who have children with special needs have to travel over an hour to find a universally accessible playground, such as those in Grand Rapids and Commerce Township.

The Community Foundation's designers have far exceeded ADA requirements to create a completely barrier-free environment where all children and adults, regardless of ability, can play side-by-side throughout the entire park. Children with sensory disabilities (such as visual impairments) or developmental disabilities (such as autism or Down syndrome) will have lots to explore as well. The playground will maximize inclusivity and normalize differences, while promoting the healthy development of all children for generations to come.

"Can you imagine being a child with a disability and having to watch from the sidelines as other kids play?" said Laurie Baumer, executive vice president of the Community Foundation. "While some playgrounds in our region include accessible equipment, this playground is different. Universally accessible means every piece of equipment is accessible to all. Even the riverbank features are accessible."

## Leadership and Partners

The project is led by the Community Foundation, in partnership with the City of Lansing.

CASE Credit Union, through its CASE Cares program, is a major financial partner with the Foundation. Wieland is the construction manager. Viridis is the park's architect, and Sinclair Recreation is designing the playground portion of the park.

"The brand-new universally accessible playground at Adado Riverfront Park will be a fantastic addition to the City of Lansing's Parks system. Lansing is a diverse and welcoming city, and it's vital that we offer options for children of all abilities to enjoy. I appreciate the effort and support from the Community Foundation, who continues to help create vibrancy and move Lansing forward," said Lansing Mayor Andy Schor.

## About the Park and Playground

This unique park will be located on the Grand River in downtown Lansing, highly visible near the southwest corner of Saginaw Street and Grand Avenue. The 66,000-square-foot park will include a custom, state-of-the-art, all-access playground that is 9000 square feet and is being carefully designed in collaboration with Disability Network and the Mid-Michigan Autism Association. Approximately 50 families who have children with disabilities have been surveyed for input on the design. The park will also include a picnic deck, pavilion, dedicated barrier-free parking, and universal access to the river's edge with a boardwalk and large platform designed for all children and adults to be up close to the river for viewing, picnicking, and fishing.



## Timeline and Status

Preliminary site plans and an estimated budget have been developed. Final design and amenities are dependent on funds raised for the project. Environmental studies have begun, with permitting, construction documents, and bidding to follow this summer. Site work is targeted for this fall and construction will be completed in 2022.

## Fundraising and Sponsorships

The total raised to date is approximately \$700,000 toward the \$1.5 million goal, including matching funds from the Community Foundation. The Community Foundation will match all private funds raised, dollar for dollar. Sponsorships are available for playground equipment, the pavilion, riverside deck, and playground naming rights. Multi-year pledges are accepted. Sponsorships include permanent, artistic signage. The Foundation reserves the right to adjust sponsorships and costs as the project evolves.

For more information, contact Laurie Baumer, executive vice president of the Community Foundation, at (517) 281-9054 or [LBaumer@ourcommunity.org](mailto:LBaumer@ourcommunity.org). ■



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## Virtual Greater Lansing Kidney Walk

**SUNDAY, JUNE 13  
AT 11 A.M.**

Go to **WWW.KIDNEYWALK.ORG/ GREATERLANSING** to sign up and learn how to share your Kidney Walk story virtually with friends and family.

# The Fight Against Kidney Disease

BY MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

**O**ver 37 million American adults suffer from Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD).

“This impacts all different kinds of people and it’s an important issue.”

These are the words of Lisa Smith, wife of Ed Smith—a Lansing community member living with the disease.

Several years ago, Lisa and Ed were going through the process of securing a life insurance policy. They were required to do a blood test that checked far more indicators than anything done by their general doctor when doing this. The active, healthy couple was surprised when Ed was turned down. Thinking it was a mistake, they applied through a different company, and again, Ed was denied.

After requesting the blood work results, they saw one number far higher than the normal range. This line, indicating issues with the kidney, inclined them to call their primary doctor and ultimately see a kidney doctor.

While the two leading causes of CKD are diabetes and high blood pressure, Ed has a genetic disease making him a rare case.

Ed’s kidneys worsened, causing severe hypertension and blood pressure. After years of managing it, he had a stroke in February 2017, which caused a brain bleed.



**After putting his name on a kidney transplant list, Lisa and Ed sent an email to their contacts inquiring if anyone was interested in getting tested for a kidney transplant. Ed’s employer shared the message, and countless individuals stepped up.**

Ed underwent a craniotomy (brain surgery) to evacuate the bleeding in his brain. The dye they used to identify the pool of blood in his brain blew out the remainder of his kidney function. Ed was now in end-stage renal failure and ended up on dialysis. For months, he was in rehab for the stroke.

“This was an extreme case. Not every kidney disease causes something that horrible, but it did in Ed’s case,” Lisa said. “We had very active, independent lives—traveling often and being involved parents. He was a guitar player that had a terrific reputation and got calls for gigs all over Michigan. Ed was a social worker, making a positive difference in the community. Ironically, Ed spent his career helping to find employment for people that had disabilities. Now, he became a person with a brain injury due to a stroke. He was dealing first hand with his disability. Everything came to a halt.”

The two months following therapy Ed had to learn how to walk again. He had lasting vision and balance issues. For two years, he had short-term memory problems and cognitive issues.

After putting his name on a kidney transplant list, Lisa and Ed sent an email to their contacts inquiring if anyone was interested in getting tested for a kidney transplant. Ed’s employer shared the message, and countless individuals stepped up.

There was a match from a work colleague of Ed’s. After an unfortunate fungal infection from dialysis that caused a six-month delay in the transplant, Ed finally had a new kidney.

The transplant functioned fine for about six months. Yet another rarity occurred—the genetic disorder that first caused the kidney failure began to attack his new organ. Ed went through another decline.

“Now, he’s back on dialysis, and we’re doing okay. I didn’t understand what being a caregiver really meant, but this has created an entire shift in our lives and the lives of our family,” Lisa said. “Our two children, Ed’s work and the community have been a huge help. My staff and clients have been immensely supportive and understanding. Ed is driving a little again and finally has some of his independence back!”

To learn more about CKD, visit [kidney.org](http://kidney.org). ■





May 11 was an exciting evening for the LRCC and our members as we were pleased to host our first in-person Member Mixer in more than 6 months! A big thanks to **Cottage Gardens** for hosting and for the 50+ members that braved the somewhat chilly weather to connect, grow and thrive. Refreshments were provided by great local businesses Good Truckin' Diner and Kona Ice. Lighthouse Party Bus even provided a stretch limousine for folks to relax!



The Chamber's big scissors are proud to be back in action with the May 14 ribbon cutting for **Total Spectrum**, located at 2248 W. Mount Hope Road, Okemos. Total Spectrum offers programs developed to help children with autism learn to communicate, develop friendships, and learn to lead healthy, happy and productive lives. Trisha Evans and her experienced team look forward to serving clients and families throughout the region. For more information: [totalspectrumcare.com](http://totalspectrumcare.com).



It was a true Chamber of Commerce day on Thursday, May 13 for Teresa Stokes and the team at **Wing Heaven Sports Haven**. Located at 3812 S. Martin Luther King St., Lansing, Wing Heaven provides delicious food, drinks, and a fun and sober atmosphere. As part of their ribbon cutting celebration and overall mission, they were proud to present a donation to UFAM (Unite with us to Face Addiction in Michigan) and have more than 10 agencies present to offer services in the battle against addiction. For more information: [facebook.com/wingheaven.sportshaven/](https://facebook.com/wingheaven.sportshaven/)



It was an amazing day in the Stadium District in downtown Lansing for so many reasons on May 20. The weather was perfect, and we were celebrating the one-year anniversary of **Goodfellas Bagel Deli**, located at 625 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. Owned by Adrian Joseph and Nate Parisian serving as the general manager, they are proud to serve high quality bagel sandwiches with a side of theatrical mafioso flair. With a focus on sourcing and supporting local ingredients, they have created a unique and creative menu that includes favorites, 'The Don' and 'The Made Man.' They also offer catering services and state employee discounts. For more information, visit [goodfellasbageldeli.com](http://goodfellasbageldeli.com).



On May 10 at 210 Abbot Street, Suite 88, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce toasted with tea to celebrate the ribbon-cutting of our latest East Lansing business, **Terracotta Acupuncture**. Dr. Elizabeth Marazita, clinic director and licensed acupuncturist, was honored by her mother, Eleanor Marazita, East Lansing Mayor Aaron Stephens, and several other important family and friends. Terracotta Acupuncture will serve the East Lansing community with private appointments from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday thru Friday, community acupuncture from 3 to 5 p.m. Monday thru Friday, and monthly wellness courses.



### New Hires

**EXIT Realty Select Partners** is pleased to announce that **Mercedes Frace** has joined its growing team of dedicated real estate sales professionals. EXIT Realty Select Partners, located at 414 S. Clinton St., in Grand Ledge, Mich. EXIT Realty Select Partners is a proud member of EXIT Realty Corp., USA's rapidly expanding network of independently owned and operated brokerages across the region.



Schram

**WILX** is excited to announce long-term broadcast professional **Mike Schram** as news director. Mike is returning mid-Michigan, a community that he knows well. After graduating from Michigan State University's School of Journalism, he started his career as a newscast producer in Lansing. He spent several years at WJRT-TV ABC12 in Flint, before returning to Lansing as an assistant news director for five years. Mike moved to Rochester, Minn., where he served as news director at KAAL-TV for five years, WEYI NBC25-WSMH FOX66-WBSF CW46 in Flint for six years, and most recently at WDIO-TV, the No. 1 news station in Duluth, Minn.

**Dewpoint**, a leading provider of technology consulting and implementation solutions, is pleased to welcome several new professionals to Lansing: **Elijah Black III** – desktop administrator, **Kerry Ellis** – project manager, **Maurice Jackson** – project manager, **Geoff Smiley** – application developer, and **George Squillace** – application developer.

**WILX** is pleased to welcome award-winning journalist **Amicia Ramsey** to its morning newscast.

Amicia joined **Mallory Anderson** at the News 10 Today anchor desk during the week of May 17. Amicia is a graduate of the University of Missouri. She was most recently a reporter at Fox13 in Memphis, Tenn., and previously with KMPH Fox 26 in Fresno, California, and WTOK-TV in Meridian, Miss.



Tahvonen

**Fraser Trebilcock** is pleased to announce **Randy Tahvonen**, former chief judge of the 29th Circuit Court serving Clinton and Gratiot counties, to the firm. He will work primarily out of the Lansing office, focusing on alternative dispute resolution. Before joining the firm, Mr. Tahvonen served Clinton and Gratiot Counties for 42 years, including 15 years as Chief Judge, before retiring in January.

### Awards

**The Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)** announced its continued investment in public art and artist entrepreneurship by awarding \$20,000 for public art through its Public Art for Communities grant program. LEAP looks forward to boosting the Lansing region's sense of place with support from **PNC Foundation** by contributing to two new permanent public art installations that will help the region compete for business and, especially, talent going forward. Delhi Township will add a gateway sculpture to its award-winning "Realize Cedar" business district, located at the corner of Cedar Street and Keller Road. Meridian Township will add a signature sculpture at the heart of its new and active Marketplace on the Green farmers market on Central Park Drive by the Meridian Mall.



The Greater Lansing Area Club of The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs honored several **LCC** leaders at the 38th Annual Founders Day awards ceremony. Honorees were: **Dr. Toni Glasscoe**, associate vice president external affairs, development & K-12 operations; trustee vice president **Angela Mathews**; and trustee **Robert Proctor**. Dr. Glasscoe received the Sojourner Truth Award, trustee Mathews received the Community Service Award, and trustee Proctor received the Frederick Douglass Award.



Porter

**Mrs. Leah Porter**, Wilcox kindergarten teacher from **Holt Public Schools**, was named the *Michigan Teacher of the Year*. Ten teachers from across the state recently found out that, in addition to the many roles they play in their schools, they now have a new title for the 2021-2022 academic year: *Regional Teacher of the Year*. Each teacher also recently interviewed to be considered for the 2021-2022 Michigan Teacher of

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the Year. The Michigan Department of Education organizes the teacher of the year program to honor and elevate the teacher's voice.



LAFCU's response to the pandemic has earned national recognition. LAFCU won a 2021 CUNA Diamond Gold Award in the new category of crisis management, added due to the pandemic. The awards program recognizes excellence in credit union marketing and business development nationwide. LAFCU's entry, *Never Waste a Crisis*, details the credit union's actions during the pandemic surrounding three key components: protecting the health of employees and members, helping members survive financially, and assisting the community.



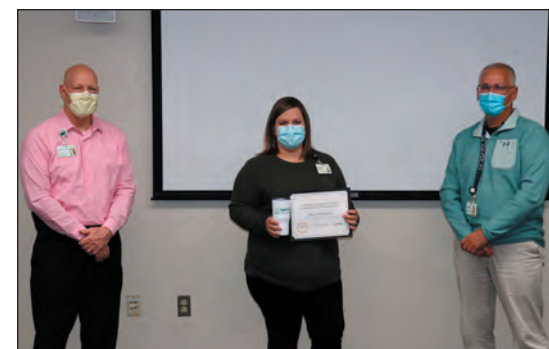
Lansing Community College newspaper *The Lookout* has captured a prestigious prize for student journalism. Despite having an inexperienced staff during the entry period of April 1, 2019, through March 31, 2020, *The Lookout* took home the top prize for Division 3 of the 2020 Michigan Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest. The *Lookout's* staff was also awarded 12 individual awards, including five for photo editor Julie Newell.

Three Eaton Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) Career Preparation Center students have been recognized with the Breaking Traditions Award through the Michigan Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education. The award aims to reward students for surpassing obstacles and stereotypes to achieve success in career and technical education programs. **Allison Zwiker** has received the Breaking Traditions Merit Award. She is a student at Charlotte High School. **Alyssa Luzkow**, a student from DeWitt and the Automotive Technology program, and **Lillyanne**

**Laws**, a student from Maple Valley, and the Criminal Justice program also received awards.

Established in 1990 by **Lake Michigan Credit Union (LMCU)**, the annual Lloyd F. Hutt Scholarship essay contest provides local high school seniors with the opportunity to win one of twenty \$2,000 college scholarships. This scholarship program honors the legacy of LMCU founder, Lloyd F. Hutt, and his lifelong commitment to education and community involvement. Local recipients include **Annie Garcia**, Okemos High School, and **Yzabella Lab**, Lakewood High School.

Nine distinguished alumni of the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Engineering were honored at a virtual ceremony to celebrate the 2021 Alumni Awards. Among the alumni recognized was **Christman Constructors, Inc.** President, **Douglas J. Peters**, who received the Civil and Environmental Engineering Distinguished Alumni Award. Peters oversees all operations for Christman Constructors, Inc. and has provided pivotal leadership on the most complex and technical projects in the company's portfolio. Peters has also used his engineering skills and knowledge to tackle the industry-wide labor shortage challenge by developing CopperWorks<sup>SM</sup>, a patent-pending human resource leveling iOS application, which earned the Associated General Contractors of America 2020 Innovation Award.



Celebrating Sparrow Carson Hospital's Caregiver of the Quarter are (left to right) Mark Brisboe, Sparrow Carson Hospital President; award recipient Megan Obermiller; and Monte Malek, Chief Nursing Officer.

**Sparrow Carson Hospital** has recognized Pharmacy Technician **Megan Obermiller** as its Caregiver of the Quarter, citing the special assistance provided over the Covid-19 vaccine. Obermiller was nominated by a fellow caregiver who recounted a conversation between Obermiller and a patient desperate to get a Covid vaccine. The patient was frustrated because she didn't know where to call to get an appointment for her vaccine. Obermiller took the time during a busy Covid-19 vaccine clinic to step aside with the patient, provide options and instructions.

The **Arts Council of Greater Lansing** is pleased to announce 2021 Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs grant funding totaling \$28,789 to be distributed to area artists and arts and culture organizations. MCACA Professional or



Organizational Development (POD) Minigrant funding totaling \$8,789 for 2021 was awarded to the following recipients: **Katherine Hagman**; Lansing Symphony Orchestra; **Nanette Mathe**; Michigan Institute of Contemporary Arts; **Jane Reiter** and **Eric Zheng**. MCACA Arts Project Minigrants funding totaling \$20,000 was awarded to the following recipients: Capital Collective, City of East Lansing, Holt Community Arts Council, Michigan Environmental Council, and REO Town Commercial Association

### Distinctions

The Michigan Department of Education has recently published the annual Bulletin 1014. In this report, **Mason Public Schools** has maintained a ranking for low total business and administrative costs per student than other Michigan districts for the years ending June 30, 2015 – 2020. For the year ending 2020, MPS was ranked 712 out of 829 schools, maintaining a position in the lowest 8% of schools in Michigan for the lowest business and administrative cost per student. For the last six fiscal years, Mason Public Schools has been ranked in the lowest 8% of all school districts in the state, for the lowest business and administrative cost per student.



The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity has announced the Michigan Chamber of Commerce Foundation/Michigan Energy Workforce Development Consortium will receive a \$1.1 million State Apprenticeship Expansion grant to support the development of 427 Registered Apprenticeships in critical energy sector job roles. **Holt Public Schools** is one of the local high schools in Michigan that offer the Energy Industry Fundamentals (EIF) class onsite at their high school. The EIF course was developed by the Michigan Energy Workforce Development Consortium (MEWDC) and is delivered by **Mark Frantz**, a Holt High School instructor in partnership with Power for America (P4A).

**McLaren Greater Lansing** received an “A” grade in the spring **2021 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade**, a national distinction recognizing McLaren

Greater Lansing’s achievements protecting patients from errors, injuries, accidents, and infections. The Leapfrog Group is an independent national watchdog organization committed to health care quality and safety. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade assigns a grade to all general hospitals across the country and is updated every six months. It is the only hospital rating program based exclusively on hospitals’ prevention of medical errors and other harms to patients in their care.



Houk

**Fraser Trebilcock** attorney **Peter D. Houk** has been selected as a member of *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* “Hall of Fame Class of 2021.” This special award recognizes esteemed members of the legal profession who have been in practice for at least 30 years. Mr. Houk has practiced law for 50 years. He was the city attorney for Lansing, the prosecuting attorney for Ingham County, and assistant attorney general for the state of Michigan before being appointed to the bench in 1986. Since retiring from the bench, he has mediated hundreds of cases.

Nineteen entrepreneurs from across Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, and Shiawassee counties will continue building or growing their businesses as part of the third program of One and All, an *inclusive entrepreneurship initiative* created in 2020 by LEAP and funded by the **Michigan Economic Development Corporation** and the **Consumers Energy Foundation**. Participants include: **Anna Escobedo**, Better than Ur’s Designs; **Blanca Sanchez de Lopez**, A Touch Frida Boutique; **Christopher Cisneros**, CRC Certified Construction; **Clarisa Trevino**, Rqf Boutique, LLC; **Daniel Fenn**, Dan’s Auto; **Daphne Whitfield**, D Lynne; **Deanna Brown**, Everything is Cheesecake; **Deborah Penfield**, ABC Transcription Services; **Erica Munchbach**, Jubilee; **Eva Thompson**, Jem Cleaning; **Jeremy Hurt**, Red Bike Delivery; **Keyana Pugh**, KAP Keanu Hotel and Resorts; **Khaliku Kaba**, Uganda Water Well; **Melissa Terry**, Lotus Beauty Lounge; **Mirwais Omari**, Asal Bee Company; **Undra Brown**, Lansing Mobile Detail; **Victoria Salazar**, Posie Errands; **Yohanna Ferra Veloso**, Habana Delight and **Yolanda Pope**, The Dignified Aging Project.

**Sparrow Hospital** has once again earned an “A” for patient safety in a recent scorecard of more than 2,700 acute care hospitals nationwide, reflecting the hospital’s commitment to quality and the needs of our patients. Prepared by The Leapfrog Group, the Spring 2021 Hospital Safety Grade rates a hospital’s overall performance in keeping patients safe from preventable harm and medical errors. The Safety Grade assigns an “A” through “F” grade to all general hospitals across the country and is updated every six months. It is based on a hospital’s

performance in preventing medical errors, injuries, accidents, infections, and other harms to patients.



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Roragen



Theuer

**Loomis, Ewert, Parsley, Davis & Gotting P.C.** is pleased to announce nine of their attorneys have been recognized as Top Michigan Business Lawyers in the DBusiness has Leading in the 2021 DBusiness Magazine: **James F. Anderton, V**, Tax; Business, Close/Private Held; Corp Finance; **Sara L. Cunningham**, Construction Law; Mineral & Natural Resources; Real Estate Law: Commercial; **Michael A. Holmes**, Gov/ Muni/Lobby; Telecommunications; **Paula K. Manis**, Mineral & Natural Resource Law; Public Utilities Law: Gas/Water/Electric; ADR Law: Commercial Real Estate, Environmental & Construction; **Michael G. Oliva**, Energy; Gov/ Muni/Lobby; Minerals & Natural Resources: Public Utilities Law: Gas/Water/Electric; **Michael H. Rhodes**, Energy; Health; Public Utilities Law; Real Estate Law: Commercial; Real Estate Law: Finance; **Kevin J. Roragen**, Land Use, Zoning; Mineral & Natural Resource Law; Public Finance Law; Public Utilities Law; **Ted S. Rozeboom**, Land Use, Zoning; Public Finance Law; Real Estate Law: Finance; and **Jeffrey S. Theuer**, Commercial Litigation; Construction; Energy; Mineral & Natural Resource Law.

**RESA** and **Grand Ledge Public Schools** Board of Education member, **Denise DuFort** received recognition from the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) to improve leadership skills, commitment to student achievement and her own continuous improvement. Awards are earned for classes completed in MASB’s leadership training program, and conference attendance, years of service and leadership activities.

**LEAP** is recognized as one of the 20 top economic development organizations (EDO) in the nation, receiving the prestigious 2021 Site Selection Magazine Mac Conway Award



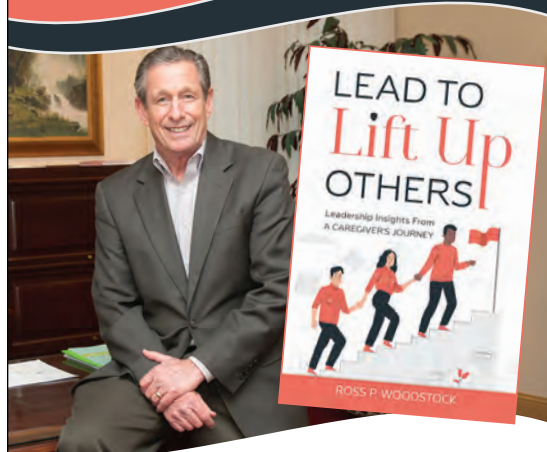


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designation. LEAP joins the ranks of high-performing EDOs in large metro competitor communities, including Austin, Texas; Charlotte, S.C.; Chicago, Ill., and right here at home in Detroit, Mich. In 2020, LEAP's economic development efforts generated \$37.4 million in private investment and 353 new jobs, and since 2012, nearly \$3.1 billion in private investment and more than 6,400 jobs.

**Dickinson Wright PLLC** is pleased to announce that the firm has been ranked as the No. 1 Bond Counsel in Michigan and the No. 5 Bond Counsel in the Midwest in The Bond Buyer's Midwest Year-End Review. Rankings are based on the dollar volume of deals in 2020 and included issues maturing in 13 months or more. In matters with multiple book-runners, each firm is credited with its actual allocation, and issues with multiple co-advisers or co-counsel, the paramount of the issues is divided equally among the firms. The Midwest region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

**Potterville Elementary School** has recently been named one of the Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase Schools for the 2020-2021 school year. According to Capturing Kids' Hearts, this award "celebrates districts where educators are exceeding expectations and creating an environment where students feel safe, connected, and eager to learn." Using key performance indicators, data and staff and student surveys, districts participate in a rigorous selection process named a Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase School. Potterville Elementary School is one of 325 schools across the country to receive this award.

### Board of Directors



Lenz

**Danielle Lenz**, an experienced public relations, marketing, and event planning professional, recently added board member for the **Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority** to her resume. Mayor Andy Schor appointed Lenz on April 19, and the Lansing City Council voted her in on April 28. Lenz is director of public relations and digital media for Edge Partnerships.



Needham

**Ele's Place Capital Region** is pleased to announce the appointment of new community board member, **Jennifer Needham, CPA, CGMA**. Needham is the chief financial officer of the 4100 Group, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Delta Dental of Michigan and Delta Dental of Ohio.

### People

**DuHadway, Kendall and Associates, Inc. ("DK Security")** is saddened to announce that its President and Chief Executive Officer, **John R. Kendall** passed away Wednesday, April 28. John Kendall had a distinguished career in law enforcement that spanned 32 years. His career included 13 years as the United States Marshal for the Western District of Michigan, appointed by President Ronald Reagan. He received five outstanding and distinguished service awards from two United States Presidents and three attorneys general. Before becoming United States Marshal, he served as the undersheriff of Grand Traverse County, Mich., and chief of police of Harbor Springs, Mich. Additionally, he was in the United States Air Force serving his country during the Vietnam War. John Kendall was a visionary leader committed to serving his community with dignity and honor. His relentless passion and dedication to DK Security were evident in his life.



**Melissa Richardson, DO**, a surgeon at **McLaren Greater Lansing Minimally Invasive Surgical Associates**, and her husband **Dan Richardson, DO**, have been volunteering their medical expertise on mission trips to Haiti for the last seven years. It's even become a family passion as the Richardson's 19-year-old twins have traveled to Haiti several times. Each year, Dr. Richardson, her husband, and a team of 20-50 other health care professionals, including OBGYNs, nurses, nurse assistants, and ER physicians, and non-medical people they refer to as "good hearted souls" travel to Haiti to offer health care to Haitians who would not otherwise be able to afford it. This team provides surgical care such as hernia repairs, thyroidectomies, hysterectomies, circumcisions, wound care, breast and colon cancer procedures, and much more.

### Company News

**LAFCU's** April reading event for kids celebrated two of spring's winged wonders: butterflies and bees. In partnership with East Lansing Public Library, LAFCU presented Listen & Learn Butterflies





& Bees, Wednesday, April 28. The free, virtual event was designed to encourage children up to age 12 to read in fun, interesting and informative ways. The featured story was “Teachers Smell Like Butterflies,” which was read by its author, **Elaine Hardy**, of East Lansing.

At the April **Mason Public Schools** Board of Education meeting, the board ratified the sale of the District’s Series II bonds. On March 17, the District completed the Bond sale of the \$19.2 million budgeted for the next phase of the District’s Capital Improvement Project. The District received strong competition for the Bonds, receiving six bids. The lowest bidder was KeyBanc Capital Markets, which provided a True Interest Cost (TIC) bid of 1.98%, down from 3.37% for the Series I sale in 2018. Due to Mason Public Schools’ high bond rating and a strong competitive bid process, the actual total debt service (principal and interest) for the bond issue was significantly under the estimated total debt service by \$10 million. This is a significant cost reduction secured for the community’s taxpayers.



In 2005, when Maxwell Matthews died at the age of six, family and friends established a foundation to create a legacy of hope for children and families. For many years, the Maxwell Matthews Foundation has supported **The Davies Project** that connects families to resources and community by providing reliable transportation for seriously ill children and pregnant women to essential healthcare. Everything the Davies Project does is about helping our community’s children be as healthy as possible. Volunteer drivers provide the rides. They also provide much hope and care during a trying time in a child’s life. Please consider getting involved on

June 26. To register go to [runsignup.com/Race/MI/EastLansing/MaxsRace](https://runsignup.com/Race/MI/EastLansing/MaxsRace) to participate virtually or in-person.

The 2021-2022 Broadway at **Wharton Center** season includes the highly awaited return of *HAMILTON*, the Wharton premiere of the Tony® and Grammy Award® winning *HADESTOWN*, the hilarious hit musical from Tina Fey (book writer), *MEAN GIRLS*, and the unforgettable story of the legendary quintet that *Billboard Magazine* named the greatest R&B group of all time, *AIN'T TOO PROUD-THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE TEMPTATIONS*. Wharton Center’s 2021-22 season also includes Sensory-Friendly Performances (SFPs). A complete list of all the SFP events and engagement activities is available online ([www.whartoncenter.com](http://www.whartoncenter.com)) or phoning the Auto-Owners Insurance Ticket Office at Wharton Center.

**MSU Federal Credit Union’s (MSUFCU)** Desk Drawer Fund Foundation celebrated its second anniversary on April 1. In its first two years, the foundation donated \$668,616 to support nearly 90 local organizations. The Desk Drawer Fund is a foundation supporting the MSUFCU and Oakland University Credit Union communities. It provides community-oriented opportunities for members, employees, and businesses to contribute to the public wellbeing through five philanthropic pillars — arts and culture, stable housing, empowering youth, financial education, and fostering entrepreneurialism.

Law Day on May 1, is an annual holiday that celebrates the rule of law and provides an opportunity to reflect on how law and the legal process benefit our nation. As Law Day publicity often spurs research on legal careers, **Foster Swift** created a free resource to guide prospective law students. Foster Swift’s attorneys compiled advice from their collective experience and made a video series that gives a comprehensive view into what law school and a career in law entail. This free video series aims to ease some doubts, set proper expectations, and better prepare prospective law students for a successful legal career. Those interested in accessing our free video series can visit [www.fosterswift.com/careers-aspiring-attorneys.html](http://www.fosterswift.com/careers-aspiring-attorneys.html)


The Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Cesar Chavez Learning Center at **Lansing Community College (LCC)** held a Multicultural Achievement Celebration on Thursday, April 29. This virtual event recognized the accomplishments of students of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and (LGBTQ) students, and first-generation students who are actively involved on and off-campus. The Multicultural Achievement Celebration honored more than 50 students preparing to graduate after enriching the LCC campus community through

affinity group work, community involvement, and social justice and diversity efforts. LCC Board of Trustees, vice president **Angela Mathews** was the keynote speaker.

**LAFCU’s** May virtual reading event for Michigan kids was all about rhinos and otters. Participants joined LAFCU in a live, virtual visit to Potter Park Zoo, Lansing. They learned about otters and rhinos, including the zoo’s rare black rhino calf, Jaali, from zoo staff, and they sang along with Lansing Children’s Choir. Key to the event was a “wild and fun” story time presented by **Jean Fellows** of Grand Ledge Area District Library, a presenting partner of the LAFCU event.

**Clark Schaefer Hackett**, a Top 100 Business Advisory firm with offices throughout Ohio, Kentucky, and Michigan, has acquired strategic HR inc., a leader in the HR industry based in Cincinnati, Ohio. In response to the changing market impacted by the pandemic, Clark Schaefer Hackett, and strategic HR inc. are proud to join together their unique and customized services to serve better and support their clients.

The **Greater Lansing Sports Authority**, **Olivet College**, and **Forest Akers Golf Course at Michigan State University** were pleased to lead




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efforts as Greater Lansing was the focal point of the Women's college golf world. The three organizations hosted the Division III NCAA National Championships. The event brought 25 schools with 131 student-athletes from across the country to battle it out on the links, May 11-14 at East Lansing's Forest Akers West.

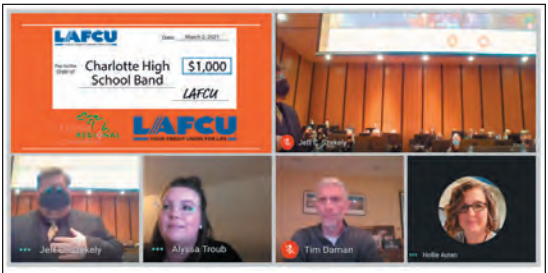


**Mason Public Schools** is thrilled to announce the return of Kids Read Now (KRN) summer reading program for summer 2021. All MPS students in grades Young 5s/Kindergarten through grade 4 will receive eight (8) self-selected books mailed to their homes throughout the summer, and an additional ninth writing book that students can self-author. Students will receive these nine (9) books to keep for free.

**LCC** held a virtual commencement ceremony May 13 to celebrate its 2021 graduates. This virtual ceremony allowed LCC graduates to be recognized for their hard work and accomplishments and celebrated by their proud family and friends. LCC's 63rd commencement ceremony was the first for President **Steve Robinson** and included remarks from special guest, Michigan's **Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II**.

The **Millcraft Paper Company** announced it has acquired the assets of **Dennis Paper Company** of Nashville, Tenn. Founded by Morris Dennis in 1969, family-owned Dennis Paper has earned a reputation as Nashville and middle Tennessee's leaders in fine paper distribution for more than 50 years. Millcraft maintains a local facility in Delhi Township.

On Monday, May 17, **Mason Public Schools** officially broke ground on the second phase of construction for the Capital Improvement Project. The District will spend \$19.2 million on this phase which includes a 55,000-square-foot addition to Steele Elementary and additional furniture, equipment, technology devices, infrastructure upgrades, and school buses for the District.



**LAFCU's** virtual presentation of a \$1,000 donation to the Charlotte High School band program resulted in two-valued gifts, according to band director **Jeff Szekely**. This is the credit union's 11th annual donation to a high school band program. It's part of LAFCU's entertainment sponsorship of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner.

The **Peckham Community Partnership Foundation** hosted its bi-annual Speaker Series featuring award-winning author and podcast host, **Nora McInerney** on Tuesday, May 25. Nora specializes in difficult conversations, including death, loss, illness, mental health, trauma, change, and how to move forward in grief with resilience, joy, love, and humor. ■

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