

FOCUS

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



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VOICE OF SMALL BUSINESS RECOGNIZES THE POWER OF TEAMWORK
A SWEET ENCOUNTER THAT IS BUILT TO LAST



TIM DAMAN
President and CEO
Lansing Regional
Chamber of Commerce



2020: A Year Unlike Any Other

As the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) team worked to produce our 2020 Annual Report, I was struck by the realization of how many dedicated people and organizations in this region stayed true to their mission. They even thrived during the most challenging year many of us has ever experienced, which has also been true for our LRCC team.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the LRCC was steadfast in providing our region's employers with meaningful, timely content and proactively turning challenges into innovation and resiliency while delivering leadership and value to the Lansing region. In 2020, the LRCC understood that local businesses were faced with so much uncertainty and forced to navigate an unknown landscape that presented many economic challenges. For that reason, LRCC was committed to finding ways to stay connected and support each other while physically apart.

The results of our intensified efforts to communicate and connect with members were well received. In 2020, LRCC experienced 65% member engagement levels and 91% member retention, despite the challenges that demanded so much of our member's attention during the year.

As the voice of business in Greater Lansing, the LRCC recognized that our role in providing regional leadership was never more important than during the challenging times we have dealt with the past several months. Most notably, the LRCC led efforts to form the RELAUNCH Greater Lansing: Economic Rehabilitation Task Force, which brought together trusted and prominent leaders in business, government, health care and education. The task force's overall goal was to develop a comprehensive strategy for industries in the region to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.



We are prepared to transition to a new era where we are working together to do great things for Greater Lansing and continue to push the region forward.

We celebrate our successes as a region and with every one of you!

Our leadership in the advocacy arena also continued to generate results in 2020. We were delighted to participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony opening the Coleman Road extension, a project for which LRCC and its regional partners managed to secure \$7 million in state funding. The Lansing Regional Chamber Political Action Committee enjoyed another successful election year, with 39 of 41 endorsed candidates scoring big wins during the 2020 elections.

The LRCC events team demonstrated incredible resiliency after the pandemic broke and quickly shifted our popular events series to virtual platforms, which was widely embraced by our members eager to maintain connections. Our marketing and communications team also displayed their innovative skills. They, too, shifted their tactics and strategies, including a COVID-19 website resource page, a #ShareTheGood campaign that highlighted local businesses working together to assist others during the COVID-19 crisis, and implemented a digital flipbook technology for FOCUS Magazine.

There is so much more to share about 2020. I encourage you to read the full LRCC 2020 Annual Report. After reading it, I think you will agree that there has never been a better time to be a LRCC member.

As I enjoyed reconnecting with hundreds of LRCC members in person on June 10 during the LRCC Annual Dinner celebration at Jackson Field, I realized how much our community is ready to move beyond the challenges of 2020. We are prepared to transition to a new era where we are working together to do great things for Greater Lansing and continue to push the region forward.

We celebrate our successes as a region and with every one of you! ■



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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Lansing 5:01

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) hosts numerous events monthly, that provide valuable content and information and give members unique opportunities to connect and network. The LRCC also hosts weekly roundtables virtually for business, community, and government leaders to provide updates and share what is happening 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 upcoming educational offerings and networking opportunities.

Registration is available on the LRCC website.

JULY MEMBER MIXER

Date/Time: Tuesday, July 13 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Location: Stonebriar at Burcham Hills – 834 Lenna Keith Circle; East Lansing, MI 48823

Description: Hosted by Stonebriar at Burcham Hills, the **July Member Mixer** will be held in-person from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Join us for this free, fun event, and engage with fellow LRCC members and business professionals to connect and build new relationships.

CHAMBER 360

Date/Time: Thursday, July 15 from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Location: Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Insurance Capital Board Room – 500 E. Michigan Ave., Suite 200; Lansing, MI 48912

Description: As a current LRCC member or a business considering joining the organization, it is critically important to understand and utilize the tools, resources, and relationships available through your membership investment. The Chamber 360 program provides an opportunity for you to connect with LRCC members, provide brief remarks, meet the LRCC team and take a deeper dive into the support and resources you receive as part of your LRCC membership. The program aims to acclimate you with your investment and put together a plan of action for membership engagement and strong ROI.

LANSING ECONOMIC CLUB

Date/Time: Tuesday, July 20 from 11 a.m. to noon

Location: Virtual

Description: Mel Tucker joined as Michigan State University's head football coach on Feb. 12, 2020. Tucker has a reputation for being a dynamic coach with a strong record, and he will discuss leadership skills from coaching a team to leading a team in business during the July 20 Lansing Economic Club.

LANSING OPEN

Date/Time: Tuesday, Aug. 17 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Eagle Eye Golf Course – 15101 Chandler Road; Bath, MI 48808

Description: The event will take place at one of the state's most pristine courses, *Eagle Eye Golf Club* on Aug. 17. The event is an excellent opportunity to network with the area's top business leaders while enjoying a fun and relaxing day. Registration and sponsorship information is available online. Raffle tickets are also available for purchase online. Super tickets and Skins are available for PRE-SALE ONLY until **Monday, Aug. 16 at 5 p.m.** Submissions to enter in drawing for the \$100,000 shoot-out will close on **Thursday, Aug. 12.** The Lansing Regional Chamber will notify the golfers selected for the shoot-out before the outing. Team names are due by **Tuesday, Aug. 10.** Sign-up sheet link provided in registration confirmation.

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, July 7 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- **Lansing – Delhi Township:** Wednesday, July 14 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- **East Lansing – Meridian Township:** Wednesday, July 21 from 9 to 10 a.m.

STAY CONNECTED. STAY SOCIAL.



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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

THANK YOU RENEWING MEMBERS

The Arc Mid-Michigan	Jungle Jane Promotions
B & D Electric, Inc.	L.O. Eyecare
Bergmann Associates, Inc.	Lansing Lugnuts
Big John Steak & Onion	Lansing Mosaic
Capital Region International Airport	Martin Property Development, Inc.
Capitol Discount & Second Hand Store, Inc.	McKinney & Associates
Centennial Group	Meridian Mall Office
Culligan Water Conditioning of Lansing	Michigan Education Trust
Diversified National Title Agency	Michigan Orthopedic Center
Faith Catholic	Michigan Polymer Reclaim, Inc.
Foresight Group, Inc.	Michigan Premier Events
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H Inc.	Niowave, Inc.
Harry's Place	O'Leary Paint
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IGT	Smart Homes, Inc.
InVerve Marketing, Inc.	TechSmith Corporation
Jackson National Life Insurance Co.	Vision Real Estate Investment
	Wickens Group

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Will Winn Games, Inc.

(517) 525-8020
willwin.games
1485 Belvedere Ave.
Okemos, MI 48864

DoorDash

doordash.com

AdvisaCare Home Health and Hospice

(616) 799-2468
1690 Watertower Place
East Lansing, MI 48823

Great Lakes Crystal Technologies

(919) 280-6331
glcrystal.com
4942 Dawn Ave., Suite 118
East Lansing, MI 48823

East Lansing Public Library

(517) 351-2420
elpl.org
950 Abbot Road
East Lansing, MI 48823

Smalley Investments

(517) 487-4850
smalleyinvestments.com
213 E. St. Joseph St.
Lansing, MI 48933

Board & Brush

(517) 319-0854
boardandbrush.com/lansing
723 Brookside Drive
Lansing, MI 48917

Davis Contractors LLC

(517) 894-7125
daviscontractorsllc.com
3862 Pinch Hwy.
P.O. Box 485
Pottersville, MI 48776

CHAMBER MILESTONES

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

**Capital Area
Transportation
Authority (CATA)**
45 Years

**Capital Area
United Way**
45 Years

**Highlands
Cooperative
Association**
30 Years

**BMC-Business
Machines
Company**
25 Years

Liquid Web, Inc.
15 Years

**Grassroots
Midwest**
5 Years

**Meiers Lombardini
Lemanski
Insurance**
5 Years

**Reserve at
Falcon Point**
5 Years

**Small Talk
Children's
Advocacy Center**
5 Years

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

Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.

ATHENA WIN
IGNITING THE LEADER IN YOU.

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Evening of Empowerment

September 30, 2021

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Featuring Keynote Speakers:

Amanda Sauer

First Female BIG10 Football Referee

Elaine Hardy

2020 Athena Award Recipient
City of East Lansing's First
Diversity Equity Inclusion Administrator

Emcee:

Audrey Dahlgren

Sports Director at WLNS TV-6/
Pod Cast: The Audrey Dahlgren Show



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925 S. Croyts Road, Lansing, MI 48917

Fifteen Wilson Talent Center Seniors Honored with Medallions for Completing National Technical Honor Society

Fifteen seniors from the Wilson Talent Center (WTC) were recently honored with medallions for completing the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS). NTHS is an honor society for outstanding career and technical education (CTE) students. NTHS has been honoring exceptional student achievement, providing scholarships and career development opportunities since 1984.

Students eligible for an NTHS medallion must maintain a minimum grade of a B+ in their CTE program, have a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0, have a recommendation from their CTE instructor and teacher from their home district, demonstrate great behavior and attendance, and offer 20 hours of community service. The following students were awarded medallions:

- Te'Ana Boone (Holt), Criminal Justice
- Rebecca Burch (Mason), Business and Risk Management
- Dajia Burke (Holt), Therapeutic Services
- Paige Filice (Leslie), Patient Care Technician
- Nathan Foltz (Leslie), Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics
- Dalton Frank (Haslett), Construction Technology
- Alexis Her (Waverly), Patient Care Technician
- Douglas Jueckstock (CRTEC, 13th year), Business and Risk Management
- Isabella Klages (Mason), Medical Assisting

- Mackenzie Kruizenga (Mason), Patient Care Technician
- Maddie Mays (Dansville), Business and Risk Management
- Mohamed Mohamed (Holt), Medical Assisting
- Madison Pham (Waverly), Medical Assisting
- Savannah Schafer (Mason), Medical Assisting
- Anita Sejdiu (East Lansing), Patient Care Technician

"We are so pleased to honor these outstanding students who not only excel in the classroom, but demonstrate a true commitment to making their communities better through leadership and community service projects," notes Joe Wenzel, WTC principal. "Their academic accomplishments in their career and technical education program, as well as their community-focused spirit, will serve them well as they take their next steps in life," Wenzel also noted.

The Wilson Talent Center, operated by Ingham Intermediate School District, offers career and technical education programs for high school juniors and seniors in Dansville, East Lansing, Haslett, Holt, Leslie, Mason, Okemos, Stockbridge, Waverly, Webberville, and Williamston. Applications are also accepted from the Lansing School District, Fowlerville Community Schools, and schools in Eaton and Clinton counties. For more information, visit www.inghamisd.org/wtc. ■

Lansing Open

TUESDAY, AUG. 17 • 8 AM

EAGLE EYE GOLF CLUB

Register at lansingchamber.org

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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Comcast RISEing Up to Support Minority-Owned Businesses

BY MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

Comcast launched RISE—a program dedicated to representing, investing, strengthening, and empowering small businesses owned by people of color.

Originating in October 2020 due to the detrimental impacts of the pandemic, social unrest, and environmental events, Comcast created this investment fund providing \$5 million worth of grants.

“RISE is available to small businesses within the Comcast footprint,” said Rob Ponto, senior public relations manager for Comcast in Michigan. “Comcast is committed to fighting injustices and inequality. We realized a unique opportunity to support the business community—specifically small and medium-sized businesses using resources from Comcast Business and Effectv, the advertising sales division of Comcast.”

Eligibility for the RISE program specifically prioritizes those businesses hit hardest—people of color, which involves Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Asian American-owned organizations.

According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, between February and April 2020, the number of active Black-owned businesses fell by 41%, Latinx-owned businesses declined by 32%, and Asian-owned businesses dropped by 25%, versus just 21% for the general population.

The RISE initiative, invested in the success of valuable community leaders and a crucial economic rebound, provides resources, tools, and expert guidance



The RISE initiative, invested in the success of valuable community leaders and a crucial economic rebound, provides resources, tools, and expert guidance to elevate small businesses that have been hit by the many burdens of the last year.



to elevate small businesses that have been hit by the many burdens of the last year. Support includes consulting, media, creative production, and a technology makeover, all assisted by specialists within each specific focus area.

Michigan locations cover the Greater Lansing, Detroit/Southeast Michigan and West Michigan/Grand Rapids area. Comcast’s RISE initiatives continue through 2022, with winners chosen quarterly. Applications are due on Aug. 7 for the third quarter of 2021. If an organization applies and does not win, they are automatically enrolled for the following selection process.

“We invite Lansing businesses owned by people of color who are in need to apply for Comcast RISE resources and get the benefits available to help stabilize and bounce forward,” Ponto said.

Visit ComcastRISE.com for additional information or to fill out a brief application. Qualifying businesses who apply for the third quarter will be awarded on Aug. 28. ■

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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.
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

W002884

United Nations Project Creates Business Opportunities

BY JOSEPH HESS, MEMBER OF THE GREATER LANSING CHAPTER, UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF THE USA

In June, the United Nations (UN) launched a decades-long project with implications for businesses locally and worldwide.

“There has never been a more urgent need to revive damaged ecosystems than now. Ecosystems support all life on Earth. The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier the planet – and its people. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change, and prevent mass extinction. It will only succeed if everyone plays a part.”

What are some of how Greater Lansing business owners, employees, governments, and others can join in this global campaign to reverse the centuries-long, cumulative damage to our earthly home?

- Become active partners in the NextCycle Michigan network sponsored by the Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy. Details regarding its 38 partners, 53 projects, resources and funding are available online at *EGLE – Recycling – State of Michigan*.
- At the individual business level, periodically review wasteful byproducts of business activity to determine if everything possible is being recycled and search for ways to use more recyclable products in business activity.



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Greater Lansing Chapter

- At the individual household level, establish recyclability as a guide for decision making (i.e., single plastic use vs. reusable bags).

The UN invites all of the world’s peoples, including businesses, to become more aware of the ecosystem implications of daily decisions, great and small. We collectively cannot continue to make only short-term profit-oriented decisions if we care about the long-term future of our planet and the world our descendants will inherit.

Future-oriented mid-Michigan business leaders will recognize and take advantage of participating in the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. ■





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Will Winn Games: Experts in Collaboration

BY MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

Immense accomplishments happen when motivated groups come together—to create an award-winning gaming program or challenge a crew of pirates in an arcade game.

The team at Will Winn Games, an East Lansing-based gaming studio, has extensive experience in both these situations.

Will Winn Games, co-founded by Brian Winn and Will Jeffery, will release its first title, *Plunder Panic*, this fall.



“We developed *Plunder Panic* at MSU’s Games for Entertainment and Learning (GEL) Lab and have received much notoriety, winning several awards,” said Winn, co-founder and studio director. “For years, we’ve been talking about how to bring the game to market. We ultimately decided to build it ourselves, forming a new venture with the many resources at MSU.”

The swashbuckling, up to 12-player, pirate-themed arcade game will support local and online options. There is both a collaborative and competitive aspect while playing on teams rivaling the opposing crew. The PC version is set for release on Sept. 19 while the console version will release later in the fall. Nintendo, Sony, and Microsoft have already approved *Plunder Panic* for each of its respective game systems.

“As one of the visionaries behind the studio and now seeing the first game under Will Winn Games come to life, it’s pretty surreal,” said Winn. “We hope to grow the game studio here and have many titles to follow.”

The studio was launched out of Michigan State University’s Game Development (GameDev) Program. This program is ranked as the number one public university by The Princeton Review.

Student employees, organizations, and Spartan leaders joined forces along the way. Meeting with Spartan Innovations for initial support, Winn and Jeffery met Matt Rudd, a mentor and resident who joined the growing team. MSU Technologies helped exclusively license the product while Red Cedar Ventures assisted with funding. Both organizations

work under the umbrella of the MSU Foundation.

“We have a very strong founding team and a unique opportunity. The game studio offers student interns real-world work while in school—truly the first step before they go to a large gaming studio,” said Matt Rudd, co-founder and CEO of Will Winn Games. “The goal is for Will Winn Games to become that large gaming company, retaining talent and growing the Lansing community.”

“Collaboration is key when building a startup and it has been exciting to see Will Winn Games join forces with so many talented groups, including the Lansing Regional Chamber to network with valued partners for successful commercialization,” said Jeff Wesley, director of Red Cedar Ventures.

For further information on Will Winn Games or *Plunder Panic*, visit willwinn.games. ■

Lansing Regional Chamber Celebrates Significant Contributions of Immigrant Communities

IMMIGRANT HERITAGE MONTH AND WORLD REFUGEE AWARENESS WEEK HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF SMART FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) celebrated the enormous positive impact that immigrant communities continue to make in helping build a stronger, more vibrant region. The impact was highlighted as part of Immigrant Heritage Month and World Refugee Awareness Week, which took place June 14 – 20.

“Our region is better in so many ways thanks to the enormous contributions being made by our immigrant communities,” said Tim Daman, president & CEO, LRCC. “In addition to the rich diversity immigrant families bring to our region, immigrant business owners strengthen our economy and revitalize our neighborhoods.”

According to the Kauffman Entrepreneurial Index, immigrants are nearly twice as likely as U.S.-born individuals to become entrepreneurs. In Michigan, while immigrants (including refugees) make up six percent of the overall population,

immigrant business owners are helping power the economy. In addition, they are bringing jobs and resources to neighborhoods across the state.

The LRCC has a well-established track record of partnerships to advance the cause of immigrant communities in the region. For example, the St. Vincent Catholic Charities (STVCC) Refugee Resettlement Program focuses on helping refugees achieve economic independence. Since 1975, STVCC has resettled 20,000 refugees in the Lansing region. The LRCC also partners at the New American Economy, a bipartisan research and advocacy organization fighting for smart federal, state, and local immigration policies.

“Some of the state’s largest and most vibrant communities are where a majority of the immigrants live and work, including Lansing,” said Daman. “Attracting more immigrants to our region is an essential component of our economic development efforts and is key to becoming the world-class region we all desire.” ■



Greater Lansing Food Bank Opens New Distribution Center

Greater Lansing Food Bank (GLFB) officially opened its new headquarters off Webster Road in Bath Township, Mich.

Michelle Lantz, CEO of GLFB, was joined by board members, Leslie Brogan and Christopher Abood, M.D., and Danielle Robinson, assistant vice president of corporate philanthropy at Jackson®, and Jeff Tagsold, CEO of Auto-Owners® Insurance, for an outdoor ribbon cutting on May 2.

“GLFB is thrilled to officially begin this new chapter of our history in a bigger distribution center that was built specifically for our work,” said Michelle Lantz. “This facility will allow us to expand our food programs to serve double the number of people we currently service in mid-Michigan.”

The food bank was previously operating in a 30,000-square-foot facility off Grand River in Lansing that was too small for additional growth. The new 60,000-square-foot location features a 7,500-square-foot freezer and a 3,500-square-foot refrigerator, as well as 36-foot-high racks that can store up to 1,050 pallets.

The Jackson® Volunteer Center is a key part of the expanded vision. It can support 45 volunteers working on four different projects ranging from sorting donated food to packing children’s backpacks or boxes of frozen and shelf-stable food for mobile food distribution.

“This new facility would not be possible without the support from donors such as Jackson® and Auto-Owners® Insurance,” Lantz continued. “Their commitment to meeting the region’s hunger needs will allow us to achieve our 2025 goal of distributing 18 million meals across our service area.”



Greater Lansing Food Bank ribbon-cutting. (l-r): Tom Izzo, Building Hope Honorary Co-Chair; Jeff Tagsold, CEO of Auto-Owners Insurance; Christopher Abood, MD, Building Hope Campaign Chair; Michelle Lantz, CEO Greater Lansing Food Bank; Leslie Brogan, GLFB Board Chair; Danielle Robinson, Assistant Vice President, Corporate Philanthropy at Jackson; and Lupe Izzo, Building Hope Honorary Co-Chair.

GLFB serves Clare, Clinton, Eaton, Gratiot, Ingham, Isabella, and Shiawassee counties through various food distribution programs and a network of more than 140 partner agencies and community groups. Food banks are the central distribution hub for a geographic region, collecting millions of pounds of new and salvaged food from retail stores, community food drives and the government. Food is distributed to partners that serve the food to residents in need. Food banks also serve food directly through mobile food distributions and other programs.

For more information about GLFB, volunteering, donating, or its new distribution center, visit greaterlansingfoodbank.org. ■

The Power of Teamwork Overcomes COVID-19 Challenges

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 have demonstrated how the power of teamwork can overcome challenges brought by the Covid pandemic: **Michigan Creative, Orthopaedic Rehab Specialists Physical Therapy, MarxModa, Peak Performance Physical Therapy, Tropical Smoothie Café, and Capital Steel & Wire.**



Michigan Creative

Michigan Creative is a full-service marketing agency, but they are so much more than that. They are a team of creatives that collaborate, listen, problem-solve, and lead by example. Their team upholds and sets the bar for what company core values are to a business. The company works with businesses of all sizes to drive growth and excel in their marketing efforts. From graphic design, website creation, and advertising to all facets of video production, branding, and consulting, their goal is to help businesses grow.

After dealing with initial concerns about the future when the pandemic broke last spring, the Michigan Creative team made a conscious decision to step up their game.

"We had daily check-ins that were more inspirational than anything else," said Brian Town, CEO, Michigan Creative. "My job as a leader is to make everyone around me is better than I am. We really wanted to make sure our people knew they were going to be safe, and they were going to have jobs."

The Michigan Creative team spent the better part of three months focusing on who they were and how they would focus on keeping everyone motivated and inspired.

"We have to be focused on how to serve our customers best," said Town. "We focused on process, leadership, and reading books. Every check-in we had, we asked each team member to share one good thing going on in their lives. It made us a better business."

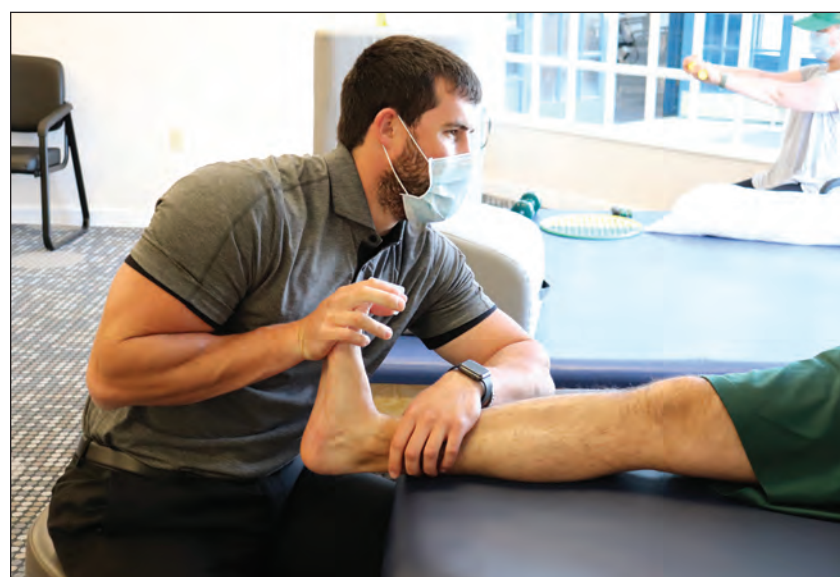
Michigan Creative believes in making their corner of the world just a little bit better. They do this by living out their **company core values**, concentrating on their people and their community. To learn more about Michigan Creative and who they are, visit michigancreative.com or **subscribe to their monthly newsletter, The Creative**, for the latest business and marketing tips, tricks, and trends.

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
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of Michigan**

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Orthopaedic Rehab Specialists Physical Therapy

Orthopaedic Rehab Specialists Physical Therapy (ORS Physical Therapy) has been locally operated and privately owned by physical therapists since 1987. They provide rehabilitation, injury care and prevention, and education to empower people in our communities to live healthy, active lives. As a community-based, privately-owned physical therapy provider since 1987, they have invested in our communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused ORS Physical Therapy to experience the biggest financial downturn in the company's history. ORS was forced to furlough 100 of its 140 employees.

"It was the biggest challenge we've ever had as a company," said Kevin Barclay, CEO and co-owner, ORS Physical Therapy. "We took advantage of every opportunity we could, whether it was the governmental stimulus which allowed us to keep employees on the payroll, cover expenses and purchase the PPE equipment we utilize every single day."

ORS had to temporarily close its Okemos location and delay opening its Leslie location. Both locations are now fully operational, and ORS has since added a fourth location in West Lansing.

"We've also been able to institute telehealth services, so those who continue to feel unsafe or are quarantined can continue to get our services," said Barclay.

Barclay says ORS is now coming out of the crisis in good shape and is grateful to see the community emerge from the pandemic.

“We have been so proud to be part of this Lansing community,” said Barclay. “Even though we are an independent healthcare provider, I have so much respect for hospitals and healthcare systems in this area that has been at the frontlines treating this virus.”

The goal at ORS is to be conveniently located near where you work, play, and live, making it easier to access the care you need. For more information, visit orsmi.com.



MarxModa

At MarxModa, Lansing’s Platinum Certified Herman Miller Dealer, they not only design, furnish, and manage dynamic workspaces that are ergonomically supportive and inspiring, but they also ensure that your final workspace will help drive business results. MarxModa’s Lansing Showroom on Pine Tree Road is a quick 15-minute drive from downtown Lansing and was established to support their partners located in and around the Michigan State Capitol.

As a company that creates office environments, MarxModa was uniquely positioned during the pandemic to help its internal staff and client partners adjust how and where work is being done.

“As a team, we had already begun to integrate new technology in our processes, but the pandemic certainly increased that transition. That included everything from creating online customer sign-off forms to holding virtual conferences,” said Brian Johnson, MarxModa Sales Team Lead. “We also helped our partners learn how to collaborate with our team and each other in a virtual environment and transition their business to digital and their teams to working remote.”

In April, MarxModa formed an internal COVID-19 task force and started hosting virtual working sessions with some of their partners to discuss the challenges of the virus and how design could be used to overcome them.

“As Michigan began to open up in the summer months, we began to consider the best ways for companies to return to their physical offices,” said Johnson. “Based on those conversations and insights from our partner Herman Miller we developed our own Return to Work Guide that includes the changes we have instituted as well as space planning protocol and product thought starters to help Michigan businesses begin to create their own plans.”

Since then, MarxModa has been helping businesses make spaces safe for staff and visitors from full-scale office redesigns to introducing key products such as barriers and sanitation tools, and selecting ergonomic furniture for home offices. For more information, visit marxmoda.com.



Peak Performance Physical Therapy

Peak Performance Physical Therapy helps patients of all ages by working collaboratively with their healthcare team to decrease pain, and restore mobility, strength, flexibility, and balance. Their physical therapists utilize a customized care approach to perform individualized healing plans to help avoid invasive procedures such as surgery, injections, and narcotics. Helping you “Reach Your Peak” is what they strive for every day!

Jill Marlan, CEO & founder, Peak Performance Physical Therapy, credited her team for their adaptability and forward-thinking to overcome the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year!

“We developed a motto early on in the pandemic: “Tough Times Don’t Last, Tough Teams Do!” We all really rallied around this idea and pulled together as a team. Trust building does not usually occur in a time of crisis. Rather, it is a time to pull from all the reserves you had stored up previously to ask for people to give their heart and soul to keep moving forward.” stated Marlan.

Peak Performance Physical Therapy also managed to open a state-of-the-art facility in Mason, Mich., in the middle of the pandemic. This brought forth many challenges. Construction was stopped and started multiple times, materials that were once available were no longer, and contractors were hard to find. Once again, the team rallied and completed an amazing facility. “It was hard enough to maintain the status quo but continuing to move forward and open a new facility with the additional challenges speaks volumes about our team,” stated Marlan.

The Peak Performance Physical Therapy team never lost their drive and dedication to keep our community safe, healthy, and pain-free throughout it all. As health care providers, the staff continued to show up for their patients every day. They maintained a safe healing environment that significantly benefited the communities they serve.

Peak Performance Physical Therapy offers the highest quality physical therapy services at all four conveniently located clinics around the greater Lansing area: Okemos, Lansing, DeWitt, and Mason. For more information, visit peakperformancecpt.com.

Capital Steel & Wire

Capital Steel & Wire is a woman-owned leading producer and supplier of domestic and international steel bar and steel wire. In 2001, Capital Steel & Wire opened its doors in Lansing. In 2005 they expanded their operations to include manufacturing and office space in Cleveland, Ohio. In 2012, they expanded their manufacturing to Mason, Mich. (2 facilities). Capital Steel & Wire, Inc. also has warehouses in seven different major cities to service the automotive, fastener, forging, machining, and construction industries.

The Power of Teamwork Overcomes COVID-19 Challenges



The COVID-19 pandemic hit at what were some of the busiest times for the steel industry. For Capital Steel & Wire, this meant maintaining a safe work environment while continuing to manufacture for essential industries that rely on their product to keep America moving forward.

“Abundant safety measures were put into place to ensure that our employees, offices, and factories were safe,” said Bill Flannery, VP sales & marketing, Capital Steel & Wire. “New tools were implemented to allow our office staff to work remotely while still having access to required data files and decisions at all levels of the company to wear masks and maintain social distancing became mandatory.”

Capital Steel & Wire identified new efficient ways to operate and strategies for better communication. This allowed the company to meet all of its customer commitments. In 2021, new markets and new demands have opened up, notably the RV and home fitness equipment industry.

“The recovery is still one step at a time,” said Flannery. “But with the safety and well-being of our employees at the forefront, we’ve been fortunate to have been able to add members to our team and we are definitely on that road to recovery.”

The vision of Capital Steel & Wire Inc. is to be a service and relationship ally to their clients. For more information, visit www.capitalsteel.net.



Tropical Smoothie Café

Tropical Smoothie Café’s menu boasts bold, flavorful smoothies with a healthy appeal, and all made to order with quality ingredients. The folks at Tropical Smoothie have found that real fruits, veggies, and juices taste better. Their toasted sandwiches, wraps, flatbreads, and quesadillas are made to suit individual tastes with quality meats, fresh produce, and flavorful sauces.

One of the challenges for many business owners during the pandemic was educating themselves about Covid related issues. Dave Buko, who, along with

his wife Ruth, who are franchisees of Tropical Smoothie stores in the Lansing market, relied heavily on the CDC, local health department, Lansing Regional Chamber, and the Tropical Smoothie national office for support.

“One thing that has really helped us is taking that information and presenting it to our employees in a fashion that they are aware that we are doing everything that we possibly can,” said Buko.

Buko lost his father during the height of the pandemic. He came away from that loss with a deep appreciation for the work that frontline healthcare workers have demonstrated throughout. He is applying that life lesson in his approach to operating his business.

“Letting employees know we understand they are scared and there are people out there they are dealing with who may be testing positive,” said Buko. “They may have family members who have gotten sick or died. It is important to let employees know you understand the fear. If people do not feel comfortable coming to work, allowing them time off and reassuring them they will have a job when they return is important. When you do that, employees appreciate it and have a greater sense of security.”

The mission at Tropical Smoothie is to inspire a healthier lifestyle by serving amazing foods and smoothies with a bit of tropical fun. For more information, visit tropicalsmoothiecafe.com. ■

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GREATER LANSING'S POST-COVID COMING OUT PARTY!

It has been a long and challenging year. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic forced us to shelter in place. Business operations were curtailed or closed altogether. Zoom meetings became the national pastime. Teams were forced to learn to work together while being apart. For many, the struggle of balancing job demands with numerous personal challenges forced upon them by the pandemic resulted in a more harried and stressful lifestyle.

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) connects members and the region to each other. COVID-19 forced the 60+ the LRCC events hosts annually to the virtual world, which worked well during the pandemic. However, some events were just not possible on the scale to which the community was accustomed, most notably the LRCC Annual Dinner. The event is typically held at the MSU Kellogg Center in February and attended by more than 700 community members.

Recognizing the strong desire in the community to restore that sense of connectedness in what had become an unconnected world, the LRCC decided to shift the Annual Dinner to June 10. The event became a strolling dinner held outdoors at Jackson Field in downtown Lansing. The Annual Dinner became a coming-out party of sorts as hundreds of community members eager to connect face-to-face again, flocked to the home of the Lansing Lugnuts for what was an evening of enthusiastic celebration.

"All of us are eager to turn the page. The unprecedented events of the last year have left their mark on our businesses, our co-workers, our families, and our friends," said Wendy Hamilton, LRCC Board Chair and CEO of TechSmith. "They have also made us stronger as business leaders. We learned. We pivoted. We adapted. We endured."

"It is so nice to be in person, in downtown Lansing, on the Michigan Avenue Corridor at an amazing venue at Jackson Field home of the Lansing Lugnuts," said Tim Daman, president & CEO,



Lansing Regional Chamber Annual Dinner Award recipients, (l-r): Rachel Kuntsch, Public Sector Consultants (Outstanding Small Business); Julie Metty-Bennett, Public Sector Consultants (Outstanding Small Business); Joan Nelson, Allen Neighborhood Center (Community Service Award); Kristin Ebert, (Ambassador of the Year); Ken Martin, Alan Martin, Jesse Martin, Joe Martin, Quality Dairy (Legacy Award).

LRCC. "We celebrate our success as a region with every one of you. We are certain we will emerge from the past year stronger than ever and look forward to seeing more of you in-person during the last half of this year."

For LRCC members attending the event, the evening marked a new beginning into transition to the post-COVID era.

"I think it is great to get outdoors, which is something people have been waiting for a long time," said Kirk Ray, president and CEO, McLaren Greater Lansing. "I think the fact a lot of folks have been vaccinated and the fact there is more guidance around the pandemic itself really lends an opportunity for people to be more comfortable and get out around others. People are starving for it."

"I am so happy to be with people and see each other in person," said Sue Hansen, vice president of commercial lending, First National of America. "I am so sick and tired of Zoom."

"It is so great to be back, in-person with real live people," said Barb Lezotte, founder and CEO, Lezotte Miller Public Relations. "I am so done with Zoom."

One of the essential components of the LRCC Annual Dinner is presenting some of the region's most prestigious awards. This year was no exception. The Community Service Award was presented to Joan Allen, executive director, Allen Neighborhood Center.

"This award does two things. First, it offers an opportunity to thank many people and organizations who have been involved in creating a stronger and more connected east side," said Nelson. "Secondly, it affirms the



Wendy Hamilton



Tim Daman



shared commitment of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and a community-based organization such as Allen Neighborhood Center in creating vibrant, connected, richly diverse and healthy communities.”

The Outstanding Small Business Award was presented to Public Sector Consultants, a certified women-owned business providing non-partisan public policy consulting services.

“We’re really grateful to the Lansing Regional Chamber for this recognition,” said Rachel Kuntzsch, president & co-shareholder, Public Sector Consultants. “We want to thank our staff first and foremost, which is why we are here and our clients for putting their trust in us every day.”

“I think as a women-owned small business, we want to thank the women who came before us,” said Julie Metty Bennett, CEO & co-shareholder, Public Sector Consultants. “While there are still challenges, the challenges for women of previous generations were far greater. We stand on their shoulders and are grateful for their efforts.”

The Chamber Legacy Award recognized Quality Dairy, which is celebrating 85 years in business and 62 years as a LRCC member.

“I am optimistic about the future of Lansing and the future of Quality Dairy,” said Ken Martin, president & CEO, Quality Dairy. “We have Covid in our rear-view mirror. We have the ability now to focus on the retail environment unbridled. I suspect the best is yet to come.”

The LRCC Annual Dinner served as an opportunity to recognize again the 2020 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, Elaine Hardy, diversity equity & inclusion administrator, City of East Lansing, and 2020 ATHENAPowerLink recipient, Lauren Palmer, owner, Curvaceous Lingerie. Also recognized were the 2020 Celebration of Regional Growth recipients: Coleman Road Extension (Dewitt Charter Township, City of East Lansing, Ingham County Board of Commissioners and Clinton County Board of Commissioners); Block 600 Development (Gillespie Group); Michigan State Capitol Restoration and Infrastructure (Capitol Commission); COVID-19 Innovation and Support (Sparrow Health).

Also recognized at the event were graduates of the LRCC Leadership Lansing program and 2020 recipients of the 10 Over the Next Ten Award, which recognizes the region’s top young professionals. Award recipients



include Matthew Anderson, Zachary Armstrong, Ceci Bordayo, Grace Braaatz-Opper, Amanda Davis, Katie Krick, Joe Lewis II, Lisa Nguyen, Josh Robertson, and Lillian Werbin.

The LRCC is fortunate to have a strong, motivated team of Ambassadors that help LRCC members connect at events during the year. Twenty business professionals serve as an extension of the LRCC team in their role as Ambassadors. Kristin Ebert was announced as the 2020 LRCC Ambassador of the Year.

“THE ANNUAL DINNER BECAME A COMING-OUT PARTY OF SORTS AS HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS EAGER TO CONNECT FACE-TO-FACE AGAIN, FLOCKED TO THE HOME OF THE LANSING LUGNUTS FOR WHAT WAS AN EVENING OF ENTHUSIASTIC CELEBRATION.”

Following the Annual Dinner, many attendees kept the momentum of the evening going and headed further downtown for BLOCK:AID, sponsored by Lansing 5:01. Three blocks of Washington Square were closed off for an epic celebration to support our local businesses.

“The combination of BLOCK:AID and the Chamber Dinner both happening on the same night downtown demonstrated the rebound vibrancy that is bound to happen,” said Scott Keith, president & CEO, Lansing Entertainment & Public Facilities Authority.

As we return to work, challenges will remain. However, the LRCC Annual Dinner demonstrated that Greater Lansing is more than ready to not only meet those challenges, but to do so in a way that moves the region forward into a bright new era.

“I’ve been waiting for this for a long time, and it feels so good to be reconnected with the business leaders in our community,” said Rocco Rucinski, senior vice president and market leader, PNC Wealth Management. “I feel very good about this and very safe. Our community has done a great job of preparing for this night. So just to be able to see familiar faces again instead of in a box on a computer, feels fantastic.” ■

A Sweet Encounter Built to Last

Nikki Thompson Frazier has always loved baking, cooking, and working with kids. She is a Girl Scouts troop leader for both of her daughters and enjoys hands-on activities with kids. Nikki decided to turn her passion into a business. She started out thinking about doing what she loves, make it pandemic proof, and making sustainable post-Covid. The result was Sweet Encounter Kids Culinary Academy, which was created last December, initially offering two primary services.

“There are two things we offer; one is our monthly kid’s subscription boxes, which go out to kids and include three theme-based recipes and a utensil of the month,” said Thompson Frazier. “We also have hands-on cooking classes for kids, which I started doing virtually.”

Though Nikki has operated primarily in the virtual space, she will soon have a storefront location in downtown Lansing, thanks to being named the recipient of the Lansing Built to Last competition. That program launched in February by Dewpoint, the Burgess Institute, and LEAP offered entrepreneurs a chance to pitch their business idea to be awarded an impressive package of benefits to help sustain their business. Sweet Encounter was chosen as the Built to Last recipient from a list of five finalists. As a result, Sweet Encounter will receive a 3,083-square-foot office in downtown Lansing with a full year of covered business services and expenses, including free rent and a physical renovation budget; free business insurance, legal counsel and IT support; and free branding, marketing, publicity, and website creation. Nikki says she was overwhelmed and speechless when she received the news.

“I thought this is such a gift,” said Thompson Frazier. “This is an opportunity to build a business of my dreams and having tons of support along the way.”

Nikki has recently met with an architect to begin planning the build-out, which will take several months. The physical storefront will have three modes of operation. There will be a bakery case in the front of the store where customers can get fresh bakery items every day and order cakes, including wedding cakes and pies. The store will also offer classes primarily for kids and special classes for adults.

“We will also create and assemble our subscription boxes in the store and get them in the mail every month to our subscribers,” said Thompson Frazier.



While the store build-out continues, Sweet Encounter customers can take advantage of all the opportunities offered virtually and through in-person classes taught at the Allen Neighborhood Center. For sure, Nikki’s business is looking at a sweet future!

“I have no other choice but to flourish because I have all this support that is geared to help me to thrive,” said Thompson Frazier. ■



Love Lansing Like a Local!

Dozens of attractions in the Capital region are open and ready to serve you safely and responsibly. By taking the Greater Lansing Safe Pledge, they have committed to looking out for your health and well-being. Greater Lansing’s attractions, recreational, and entertainment facilities are inviting you to come and play this summer. From museums and science centers to arts and outdoor activities, you’ll discover adventures for all ages right in your backyard! And by supporting the local tourism industry, you can keep Greater Lansing great! Play, explore and support local! Plan your summer staycation and find all the participating locations at lansing.org/lovelansing. ■



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ATHENA Award Recipient Rallies Community Support for Reading

Upon learning she was to receive the ATHENA Leadership Award on March 24, 2020, Karen Grannemann looked forward to the awards luncheon to thank the many people who have supported her along the way. Thanks to COVID, the in-person event was canceled and ultimately held virtually.

"Since we couldn't be together, I decided to undertake a community project that would enable us to do something together," said Grannemann, CEO and general manager, the University Club of Michigan State University. "I went in search of a project that could engage a lot of people and embody the ATHENA principle of giving back while benefiting our community."

Grannemann, together with a committee of stakeholders, set out to make a positive impact on the critically important third-grade reading level by employing three strategies: 1) provide every student in the Lansing School District (LSD) access to the print and digital resources of the Capital Area District Library (CADL); 2) record at least 100 people reading a children's book and present these recordings to LSD teachers and students; and 3) raise at least \$50,000 for Reading is Fundamental, an organization that gives free books to LSD students every year.

"Research has shown that when kids own books, they tend to become better readers," said Grannemann.

The project was enormously successful. On March 1, the first day of "March is Reading Month," a \$57,193 check was presented to Reading is Fundamental. This money will enable the organization to double the number of books each student in grades K-3 will receive for the next five years, sending a strong message to these kids that reading is both important and fun and that our community believes in their future. Every student now has a CADL card, and the LSD received well over 100 videos of people reading their favorite children's book. These resources will remain available within the school district for years to come and serve as teaching tools and inspiration for the next generation of students.

"Lansing is an amazing community, and I want to thank every person who read a book or contributed to this fund," said Grannemann. "You helped us turn lemons into lemonade and challenging times into change for Lansing's kids. Special thanks go to our program sponsors for providing matching funds that enabled us to meet our fundraising goal. Hats off to AF Group, ATHENA WIN, Delta Dental, MSUFCU, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Therapy Today Counseling." ■



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Social Districts in Old Town, REO Town, and Downtown Encourage Public to Sip, Shop and Stroll

Following a tumultuous year for many Lansing area businesses, Lansing residents can now eat, drink, and enjoy their communities in approved social district zones throughout Old Town, REO Town, and downtown. This means people in these three areas can now buy alcohol from participating businesses and consume their drinks in the open in properly marked social district cups. Social districts went live with a soft launch in conjunction with the downtown Lansing Block:AID event, held Thursday, June 10, following several businesses receiving their approvals for social district permits from the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC).

“Social districts are another tool to help create exciting, walkable corridors in Lansing. I encourage residents and visitors to head to our new social districts to support our local businesses and enjoy all that Lansing has to offer,” said Lansing Mayor Andy Schor.

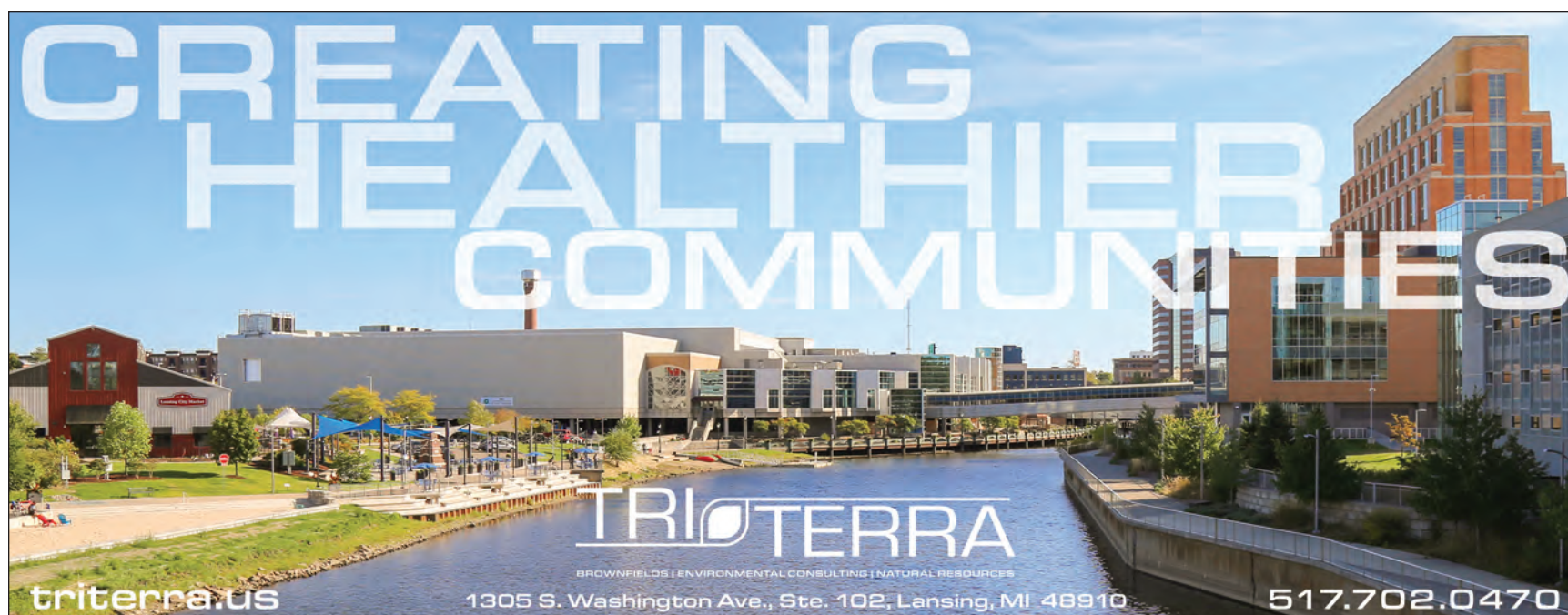
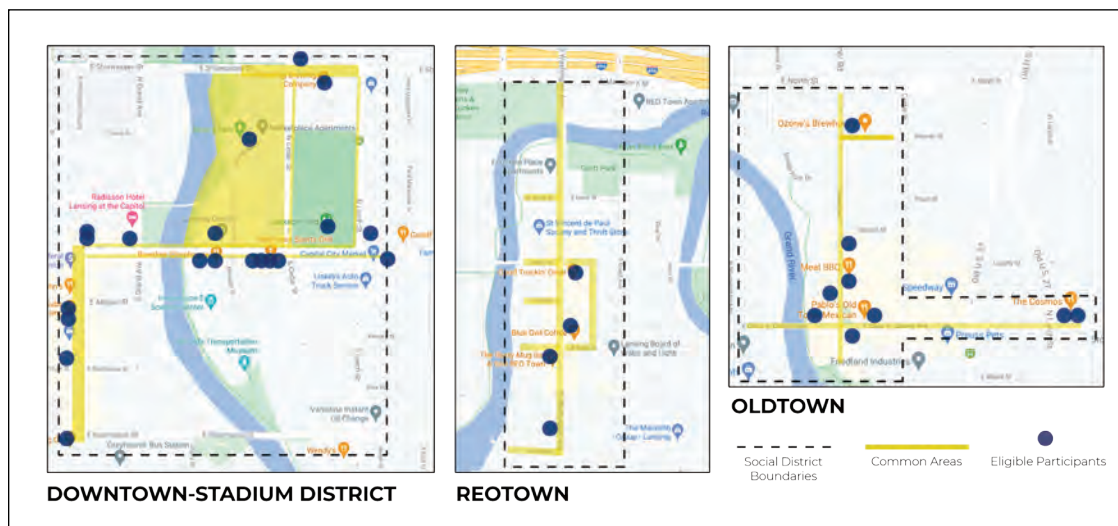
To enjoy adult beverages in the social districts, residents must ask participating restaurants for a social district beverage that will be served in a marked cup to enjoy in the boundary areas. Licensed eligible businesses will continue to be approved on a rolling basis by the MLCC as their applications come in. As of the end of June, approved businesses included:

- Esquire Bar
- Duke's Saloon
- The Grid Arcade & Bar
- Grand Cafe
- MP Social
- Lansing Brewing Company
- MEAT

- Michigrain Distillery
- Midtown Brewing Company
- Omar's
- Radisson
- Sleepwalker Spirits & Ale
- The Tin Can
- UrbanBeat

“All of our downtown businesses need support as they continue to meet the needs of their customers during this pandemic. Having social districts open at the start of the summer is exciting as it gives all those 21+ another way to lift up local businesses while enjoying the capital city,” said Cathleen Edgerly, executive director of Downtown Lansing Inc.

Each Lansing social district is open Sunday – Thursday from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to midnight. ■



Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Announces Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DEI SERIES DESIGNED TO EMPOWER THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO AN EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE REGION

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) has announced a significant commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion that will empower the business community to contribute to an equitable and inclusive region.

“While we recognize the rich diversity of our region, we also know there is need to drive positive change to eliminate systemic inequalities,” said Tim Daman, president and CEO, LRCC. “The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce has reaffirmed our commitment to step up as business leaders and work toward an equitable future for all.”

Embracing diversity, equity and inclusion makes organizations stronger and communities more vibrant and welcoming. A recent survey from Glassdoor showed that 67% of job seekers consider workplace diversity an essential factor when considering employment opportunities. More than 50% of current employees want their workplace to do more to increase diversity. Additional research from Fast Company shows organizations with above-average gender diversity and levels of employee engagement outperform companies with below-average diversity and engagement by 46% to 58%. According to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation “The Business Case for Racial Equity: A Strategy for Growth,” businesses with a more diverse workforce have been shown to have more customers, higher revenues and profits, greater market share, less absenteeism and turnover, and a higher level of employee and customer commitment to their organizations.

The LRCC DEI commitment will feature three distinct programs:

Executive Roundtables will offer CEOs and small business owners the opportunity to confidentially discuss best practices, equity tools, and approaches in strengthening DEI in their organizations.

The Institute of Programs will offer DEI courses to teams for professional and organizational development.

DEI Roundtables will provide practical tactics to position diversity as a focus of business strategy for growth. Roundtables will foster an open and welcoming environment that will encourage diverse culture appreciation while advancing DEI initiatives to create and sustain positive change in our workplaces and community.

“Our commitment is to actively work to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority for the business community by developing tools and opportunities that promote diverse and inclusive business practices in the Greater Lansing region,” said Ashlee Willis, founder and CEO of Michigan Premier Events and event manager for the LRCC.

The first step in the LRCC DEI initiative is understanding the business landscape in our region related to diversity, equity and inclusion. The LRCC has distributed an anonymous survey to its members, which will be used to ensure the DEI programming and resources match the business community’s needs.

For more information about the LRCC DEI series, visit lansingchamber.org/DEI. ■



Charity Event Raises Funds for Autism Acceptance

Former MSU football coach Mark Dantonio and former Detroit Lions legends Lomas Brown and Eddie Murray were among notables who gather in support of autism acceptance and awareness during a fundraiser held June 11 at the Meridian Mall in Okemos. The event generated more than \$10,000 in funds that will be utilized to build a sensory room so individuals with autism can comfortably and safely enjoy a live sporting event.

“I am very grateful for the support and encouragement that Coach Dantonio, Lomas Brown, Eddie Murray and former Lion Rodney Peete have shown in promoting autism acceptance, said Xavier DeGroat, a Lansing area native with autism and founder of the Xavier DeGroat Autism Foundation.

DeGroat expects the funds to be applied towards construction of a sensory room either at the home of the Detroit Lions at Ford Field in downtown Detroit or at MSU’s Spartan Stadium. The sensory room would allow for sound, lighting and frequency to be adjusted to accommodate individuals with autism.

Founded in 2018, the Xavier DeGroat Autism Foundation is to create and promote opportunities for people with autism through advocacy, education, economic opportunities and humanitarian efforts. Xavier DeGroat was diagnosed with autism at age four and has experienced discrimination, economic and job setbacks and educational difficulties throughout his life. Xavier has decided to dedicate his life to helping others and is working to create a society that better understands autism and enables those with autism to be successful. ■

New Hires



Kortas

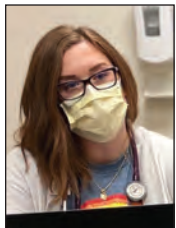
Madison Kortas joins **Triterra** as a geologist. Madison holds a bachelor's degree in geological sciences at Michigan State University. Her work focuses on hazardous materials services. Kortas conducts field inspections/sampling to determine the presence of asbestos, mold, and lead.

Peckham has named **Brett Linton** as its new vice president of manufacturing. Linton began his appointment in early June and joins Peckham's leadership team in leading its growing apparel manufacturing division.



Twohig

Taylor Twohig joins **Triterra** as an environmental scientist. Taylor holds a bachelor degree in biology and environmental science from the University of Michigan – Flint. Her work focuses on environmental due diligence services. Taylor also supports the Natural Resources Group.



Wildern

Sparrow Eaton Hospital is pleased to welcome **Elise Wildern** as nurse practitioner to the Sparrow Medical Group Potterville office, adding to the quality patient care provided by **Todd Otten, M.D**, **Devon Kruger, NP**, and **Elizabeth McDowell, NP**. As a resident

of Eaton County for the past eight years, Wildern is grateful to work in the community she's grown to love. SMG Potterville is located at 133 Lansing Road in Potterville.

Awards

Sparrow Hospital and Sparrow's community hospitals honored thousands of nurses during this year's Nurses Week, which recognizes the extraordinary care they provided during the unrelenting past year of the COVID-19 virus. At **Sparrow Carson Hospital**, **Tabitha Durant, RN**, was named Nurse of the Year. At **Sparrow Clinton Hospital**, **Angie Hufnagel, BSN, RN, CEN**, was recognized as Nurse of the Year. During hospital's annual Nurses Tea, **Melanie Kotowicz, BSN, RN, CEN**, was named a DAISY Award honoree for outstanding care based on a patient letter that identified her as a "star caregiver who was very patient and caring." Sparrow Clinton's surgical team received the DAISY Team Award, after being nominated by various patients for their professionalism, kindness, and exceptional care. **Sparrow Eaton Hospital** held a nurses appreciation ceremony in honor of Nurses Week and plans to announce its Nurse of the Year this summer. **Virginia (Ginner) Burnham** was named **Sparrow Ionia Hospital's** Nurse of the Year after being praised for always being willing to go above and beyond for her patients and colleagues.

CASE Credit Union was named an Outstanding Credit Union of the Year by the Michigan Credit Union League. The award was announced during the 2021 joint awards ceremony the league hosts with the Michigan Credit Union Foundation. The Outstanding Credit Union of the Year

recognizes a credit union for outstanding contributions with member services and community engagement. **CASE Credit Union** took top honors for a medium-sized asset.



The Aviation Technician Education Council at the **Lansing Community College** has named **JuliAnne Miller** as the 2021 James Rardon Aviation Maintenance Technician Student of the Year. The award is the premier educational award in the aviation technology field. Miller was chosen from among nominations by 180 schools across the country. Miller is the first Lansing student to receive the award. She was cited for academic achievement, involvement in activities that showcase leadership, and other contributions to the school and community.

On May 12, the 21st Annual Ingham Student Art Exhibit was presented. The event was held virtually, broadcasting from the **Lansing Art Gallery and Education Center**. Winning artwork selected for display at Ingham ISD was submitted by the following teachers: **Gina Reid**, Beekman Center, Lansing Public Schools; **Layna Lesnau**, Cole Academy East, East Lansing; **Spencer Corbett**, East Lansing High School, East Lansing Public Schools; **Pamela Collins**, Everett High School, Lansing School District;

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Jaime Valente, Glencairn Elementary School, East Lansing Public Schools; **Kayla Fletcher**, Haslett High School, Haslett Public Schools; **Liz Wylegala**, St. Martha School, Okemos; **Susannah VanHorn**, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish School, East Lansing; **Laura Weber**, Waverly High School, Waverly Community Schools; **Meagan Kubu**, Williamston High School, Williamston Community Schools; and **Jonathan Gere**, Williamston Middle School, Williamston Community Schools.

From Grand Ledge High School, **Bella Seigo** competed in and won Best Actress in the 10th annual Sutton Foster Awards held virtually by **Wharton Center** on Sunday, May 23. The Sutton Foster Awards celebrate Michigan high school actors' outstanding artistic achievement from a musical theatre production or audition. Evaluated on vocals, dance, and acting skills, these two students were the top contestants out of a total of 45 nominated drama students. Awards were also presented to 2021 Best Featured Actor Award - **Donovan Hills**, Dewitt High School and 2021 Best Featured Dancer Award - **Lauren Handspike**, Dewitt High School.



Sparrow Carson Hospital recently honored Sara Hagerman (center), emergency department manager, with a DAISY Nurse Leader Award. Celebrating her were (from left) Monte Malek, chief nursing officer, and Mark Brisboe, president of Sparrow Carson Hospital.

Sparrow Carson Hospital has recognized **Sara Hagerman, RN**, emergency department manager, as a DAISY Nurse Leader honoree. Hagerman has been a registered nurse at Sparrow Carson since July 2004, and a manager in the emergency department since November 2014. She is dedicated to her responsibilities as a manager, spending countless hours a day at

the hospital ensuring her staff's needs are met, her department is running smoothly, and above all, the patients who come to Sparrow Carson's emergency department receive exceptional, efficient care.

PFCU has selected 10 high school seniors from the 2021 graduating class as McCrumb Scholarship recipients. These students were selected from the communities PFCU serves to share in \$10,000 of scholarship monies equally. The PFCU scholarship committee reviewed over 100 scholarship applications and selected the winners from a very qualified pool of candidates. PFCU has been offering \$1,000 McCrumb Scholarships for the past 20 years, and this year is no different. Congratulations to PFCU's 2021 McCrumb Scholarship recipients: **Alayna Goodman, Avery Zimmerman, Regan Kopesky, Cooper Gross, Hannah Walters, Julia Esch, Kaitlyn Heffelbower, Sammy Perrone, Oliver Beswick**, and **William McPherson**.

Holt Public Schools is excited to announce that a member of their teaching staff has been named one of six state finalists for the national 2021 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. This award "recognizes those teachers who have both deep content knowledge of the subjects they teach and the ability to motivate and enable students to be successful in those areas." **Heather Peterson**, science teacher at Holt High School, and her five fellow finalists from Michigan will advance to the next round, where their applications will be reviewed and scored at the national level.

Distinctions



McLaren is pleased to announce **Bowen Kurtzhals** was the first baby born on May 17, and named the 517 Day baby at McLaren Greater Lansing. Bowen was born at 8:25 a.m. to Kailee and Austin Kurtzhals. Bowen Kurtzhals measured 20 ½ inches and 8 lbs. 15 oz. Bowen and his parents are recovering and doing well.

On Wednesday, May 12, in a virtual ceremony, the **Wilson Talent Center (WTC)** awarded just over \$21,000 in scholarships to 31 graduating seniors. To be eligible, students needed to complete a scholarship application and have a recommendation from their WTC instructor.

The scholarships were made possible by generous donations from individuals, businesses, and community partners.



LAFCU had asked Michigan residents to graphically depict love and equality for use as public reminders about what is important in daily life. LAFCU is showcasing the 10 winning entries of its "Act with Love & Equality" art initiative on billboards across Michigan and via LAFCU's digital channels, including its social media platforms and website. There is also growing community support of the project, too. Eaton Theatre, Charlotte, and Lansing Lugnuts are among the businesses sharing the images on their platforms. The winning artwork, along with the respective artist statements, are posted on the LAFCU website at lafcu.com/loveandequality.

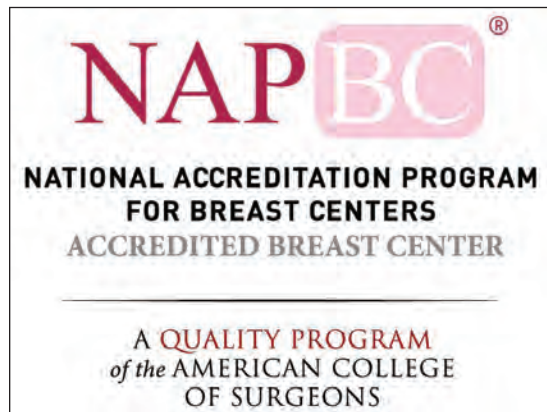
Eaton Regional Education Service Agency is pleased to announce 38 Career Preparation Center (CPC) students have met the requirements to be recommended for membership into the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS). NTHS recognizes outstanding student achievement in career and technical education. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, these students demonstrated high scholastic achievement and responsibility by earning an average GPA of 3.5 or higher and maintaining four or fewer unexcused absences and two or fewer tardies in their CPC programs.

Financial Technology, Inc. has been named to the National Association of Plan Advisors' list of the nation's top defined contribution advisor teams. This represents the fourth consecutive year in which the East Lansing-based firm has been recognized as one of the nation's top defined contribution plan providers. Unlike other lists, this focuses on individual firms, or what may be referred to as a team or office, and the assets under advisement related to their defined contribution practice, specifically in a single physical location.

As part of the Nurses Week festivities, **McLaren Greater Lansing** highlights one nurse who has gone above and beyond the call of duty. This year, **Morgan Zemer, RN**, was selected as the 2021 Nurse of the Year. Zemer works in the McLaren Greater Lansing geropsychiatry unit, where nurses have a high level of compassion and sensitivity. **Bereky Yohannes, RN**, in the emergency room, and **Stacie Worst, RN**, in the hospital, were both also recognized at the ceremony.

Maner Costerisan, an award-winning, full-service advisory, and accounting firm, was

named to the Top Regional Firms in the Country by Accounting Today magazine. One of five Michigan-based firms, Maner Costerisan, ranked in the Top 25 Firms in the Great Lakes Region, which includes firms in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. 2021 marks the second year Maner has received the Top Regional Firms designation.



McLaren Greater Lansing has received national accreditation for its *breast care center* by the *National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC)*. Affiliated with the American College of Surgeons, the NAPBC is a nonprofit organization that identifies and recognizes breast centers providing high-quality care in the United States.



The Sparrow Carson Hospital Laboratory has received an important national recognition from the accreditation committee of the College of American Pathologists (CAP), denoting the excellence of the hospital's lab services. Sparrow Carson Hospital Laboratory is one of more than 8,000 CAP-accredited facilities worldwide. The federal government recognizes the CAP Laboratory Accreditation Program, begun in the early 1960s, as being equal to or more stringent than the government's inspection program.

The Lansing Economic Area Partnership's (LEAP) efforts to transform and connect a vital and growing regional industry cluster into one of the nation's top 20 medical technology

ecosystems is taking a significant step forward with support from a U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant. The project work funded through the grant is expected to create 560 jobs, retain 65 jobs, and attract \$425 million in private investment. The EDA grant will help jumpstart a nearly \$1.1 million plan to build up and connect robust health care and medical technology value chain in the Lansing region, from startups to global companies working in pharmaceuticals, medical device manufacturing, biotechnology, digital health, and more. The \$813,000 EDA grant will be matched with \$257,000 local funds, including support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) using Community Development Block Grant funds and in-kind matching funds from LEAP.

Promotions



Samuel

Lansing Community College President Steve Robinson has formally appointed Seleana Samuel to senior vice president for business operations, a role she has held on an interim basis since July 2020. In this role, administrative services, information technology services, human resources, marketing, public relations, purchasing, risk management and legal services, and compliance report directly to Samuel.



Jannereth

LAFCU has promoted Emily Jannereth to the new position of chief technology officer. This position focuses on using technology to improve efficiencies and enhance service for members. In her new role, Jannereth is responsible for planning, establishing, and administering strategy for the Michigan credit union's technology, including its remote infrastructure. She will continue to report to LAFCU CEO, Patrick Spyke.

Board of Directors & Executive Committee Updates



Stiffler

The Ingham Health Plan (IHP) Corporation has named Kathleen Stiffler, senior health policy advisor and executive director of the Michigan Health Policy Forum, Michigan State University, Institute for Health Policy to its board of directors. IHP is a nonprofit that provides access to basic medical and dental care for low-income uninsured Ingham County residents.

Three MSU Federal Credit Union board members have been re-elected for three-year terms. Those Board members are Ernest Betts; John Brick; and Janet Lillie. Ernest Betts will continue in his role as treasurer. Additional board members are Angela Brown, chair; Gregory Deppong, vice chair; Steven Kurncz, secretary; Bill Beekman; Michael Hudson; and Elizabeth Lawrence.

The following are new Highfields board members for 2021-2022: Carol Beals, M.D., lives on an 80-acre farm in Grand Ledge and recently retired from a private practice in rheumatology at Beals Institute in Lansing. Chad Karsten is an associate attorney at Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes (FSBR), PLC in Okemos. Chad practices in FSBR's Labor & Employment practice group. Kiyerra Lake is a Michigan native and currently works at WLNS-TV 6 News in Lansing. She is an anchor for 6 News this Morning.



Roberson



McCulloch



Benson

Cinnaire has announced three new members have joined the organization's board of directors. The new board members will provide strategic direction supporting continued growth around Cinnaire's unwavering belief that all people deserve the opportunities to live in healthy communities. The new board members include Quinetta Roberson, John A. Hannah distinguished professor of management and psychology, Michigan State University; Anne McCulloch, president and CEO, Housing Partnership Equity Trust and Jeffrey Benson, president and CEO, Case Credit Union.

People News



Franzen

Valerie Franzen, conference planner and global project manager with ConferenceDirect, is a proud member of the 2020-2021 Leadership Lansing cohort. Additionally, Valerie completed the Digital Event Strategist and the Pandemic Compliance Advisor for Meeting & Event Professionals certification programs. While continuing to support virtual and hybrid events, Valerie is planning safe face-to-face meetings for her clients, locally and nationally.

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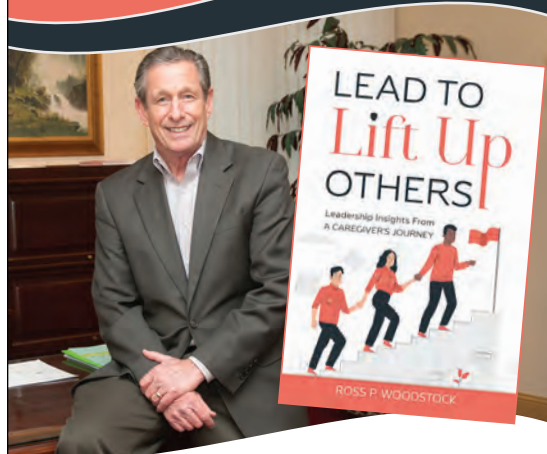
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Company News



A meal delivery service coordinated through **Sparrow Eaton Hospital** is celebrating 50 years of bringing food and comfort to area residents. Thanks to an incredible volunteer base, Mobile Meals has maintained its operations 365 days a year for a half-century. The organization has delivered nearly half a million meals during that time.



Sparrow's Mobile Health Clinic recently made its first stop in the Carson City area, providing primary care services such as screenings, immunizations, and physicals to patients outside of Sparrow Medical Group Ithaca. The mobile unit serves as a primary care practice on wheels, with a mission to improve access to care for underserved communities. The Mobile Health Clinic returned to SMG Ithaca on Thursday, July 29. To learn more about the Sparrow Mobile Health Clinic and upcoming stops, visit Sparrow.org/mobileclinic.

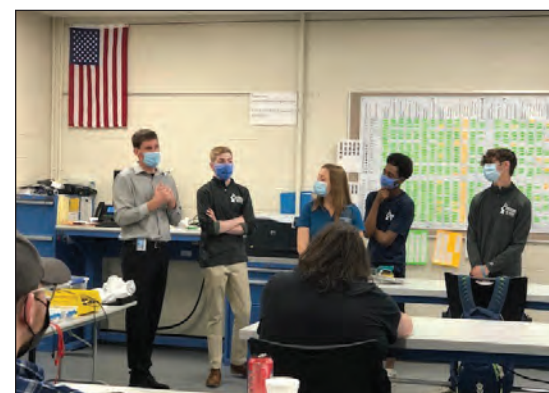
On Saturday, May 22, **Mason Public Schools (MPS)** and the Mason Fire Department partnered on a training exercise for local fire fighters. MPS provided a retired school bus which otherwise would be sent to a scrap yard to be used to demonstrate and practice effective evacuation. The school bus was placed on its side and the Fire Department utilized their specialized equipment for the demonstrations. The event followed current safety protocols.

Mallory DePrekel of Lansing, along with over 1,000 local families, are applauding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library for instilling a love

for reading in their young children. The program provides Lansing children with free, high-quality, age-appropriate books every month. The **Lansing Housing Commission (LHC)**, in partnership with **Communities in Schools of Michigan**, brought the program to the 48906 zip code in 2020. The process started when **Kristine Ranger**, LHC consultant and former teacher, thought the program would significantly impact those who live in LHC housing because literacy was an identified need for residents.

Holt Public Schools (HPS) is excited to announce a new career and technical education aviation program for students. This state-approved aviation program will focus on aeronautics, aerospace science and technology. HPS is partnering with Western Michigan University School of Aviation and Great Lakes Air Ventures to offer two elective courses for students in grades 11 and 12. The elective courses will be Futuristic Flight and Introduction to Flying. Both courses come with the opportunity to earn industry credentials and students can transition into a high-demand, high-wage industry in the Lansing region.

Martin Commercial Properties, a leading privately owned real estate services and development company has facilitated the sale of a full-service restaurant at 2440 Cedar St. in Holt. The turnkey facility was previously home to a long-time establishment and attracted a pair of local entrepreneurs to relocate their growing eatery to the well-equipped property. Gravity Smokehouse & BBQ purchased the 4,954-square-foot spacious restaurant south of I-96 from NJF of Lansing. Martin Commercial Properties represented the seller Nick Fata, the managing member for NJF of Lansing. The transaction and sale of the property was facilitated by Martin's **Thomas Jamieson**, senior associate, and office advisor.



Students in the Engineering Technologies program at the **Wilson Talent Center** recently participated in a student-led energy audit program made available through Consumers Energy. Students examined the types of lighting (fluorescent or LED) installed throughout the

WTC and then calculated how much energy is consumed to operate the lights in the building and how much energy consumption could be reduced if all lights were LED. The Consumers Energy Student-Led Energy Audit is a free educational program offered to schools.

The **Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)** and **Delhi Charter Township** board of trustees jointly announced global healthcare supply chain company, McKesson is making a significant investment in a pharmaceutical distribution center in Delhi Township. The investment will create more than 80 competitively paid new jobs over three years. Led by LEAP's Attraction program, the Lansing area successfully competed against other location options to keep jobs in Michigan. McKesson will hire a variety of positions from material handlers to support staff, supervisors, and management. Hiring began in June and will continue for several months. The distribution center is expected to be fully operational in fall 2021. Qualified candidates are encouraged to apply at mckesson.com/careers.

Every year, local food pantries are fully stocked in the winter months thanks to generous holiday donations—but when summer comes, donations drop considerably, and pantry shelves become sparse. This can leave low-income, hard-working families with limited options during this time of year. **Capital Area United Way** is asking local businesses and community members to participate in their "Summer Stock Up" event to restock local food pantries with items to get them through the warmer months. For more info, visit www.micauw.org/summer-stock-up.

The Capital Region Technical Early College (CRTEC) is a high school-to-college program where students start in grade 11 and leave after grade 13 with a college degree or certification. Tuition is free, and the program gives students relevant career-related experience. The program is a partnership between **Clinton County Regional Education Service Agency - Career Connections**, the **Eaton Regional Education Service Agency Career Preparation Center** and the **Ingham Intermediate School District Wilson Talent Center**. This year, twenty-nine students completed their CRTEC programs and received their degrees or certifications. Instead of a ceremony, the CRTEC team created lawn signs for each student featuring their name, the college program they were enrolled in, and the college they attended. They visited their homes to drop off "swag" that was provided by the colleges.

As part of its community outreach and giving efforts, **CASE Credit Union** recently presented The Firecracker Foundation with a check for \$5,158. Credit union employees raised funds throughout the first quarter of 2021.

The Firecracker Foundation provides holistic healing services to youth and families impacted by sexual violence throughout the Greater Lansing region by offering high-quality, trauma-informed mental health services facilitated by trained professionals. Through donation efforts throughout the community, the nonprofit provided 175 children with assistance in 2020.

The **Lansing Housing Commission** Board of Directors recently approved \$50,000 to help curb escalating gun violence and deaths in the city. Over the next three years, the funds will go toward Advance Peace, an organization dedicated to ending cyclical and retaliatory gun violence in American urban neighborhoods. Advance Peace establishes local programs that provide developmental and healing-centered resources to those at the center of lethal firearm offenses.

In the second year of the business and risk management program at the **Wilson Talent Center (WTC)**, students had a school year full of incredible milestones, and accomplishments despite a global pandemic. These accomplishments include paid internships, national certifications and earning free college credit. The program exposes students to general business concepts with a focus on the insurance industry. Second-year students participate in the Certified Insurance Service Representative high school program through the National Alliance for Insurance Education & Research, allowing them to earn national insurance industry certifications.

The **Food Bank Council of Michigan**, in partnership with the **Michigan Department of Health & Human Services**, recently received a \$200,000 Feeding America Boundless Collaborations grant to support a statewide grocery delivery program for older adults facing food insecurity. The Food Bank Council of Michigan applied for the Boundless Collaborations program with the government and three regional food banks. The grant initiates a feasibility study and project model, which sets the path for statewide implementation.

MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) employees raised \$39,917 for REACH Studio Art Center and an additional \$8,639 for the Capital Area United Way (CAUW) during the first quarter of 2021, totaling \$48,556. Credit Union employees selected REACH Studio Art Center as their first quarter 2021 charity partner. Funds were raised through dress-down days, online sales, and raffles. A different charity partner will be supported in each year's remaining quarters: Salus Center in the second quarter, New Hope Pet Rescue in the third quarter, and Firecracker Foundation in the fourth quarter. MSUFCU's ongoing charity partner, CAUW, will also benefit from funds raised each quarter.

On June 10, **The Christman Company**, a national construction and real estate development firm based in Lansing, announced the creation of the Christman Building Innovation Group (CBIG) to initiate, champion, and drive innovation and excellence across its self-perform services. CBIG is led by long-time Christman executive **Douglas J. Peters**, transitioning from his previous role as president of Christman Constructors, Inc. Peters will be aided in this effort by the following team members in new roles **Jim Like**, president, Christman Constructors, Inc.; **Paul Leitert**, president, Christman Mid-Atlantic Constructors; **Joe Leone**, vice president, Christman Building Innovation Group; **Tyler Mance**, vice president, Christman Constructors, Inc., Interiors Group; **Andrew Holman**, vice president, Christman Constructors, Inc.; **Steve Naschert**, vice president of operations, Christman Mid-Atlantic Constructors and **Andy Bellmore**, director of operations, Christman Southeast Constructors-Knoxville.



The **Lansing Symphony Orchestra (LSO)** is pleased to announce its 2021-2022 season beginning Oct. 9. This is LSO's 92nd season, and it is a celebration, bringing back the joy and healing power of music to the stage. LSO's 2021-2022 season features five concerts in the MasterWorks Series, three in the Pops Series, four in the Chamber Series, and two in the Jazz Band Series. There are five different subscription options. The VIP package includes all 14 concerts in all four series and a parking pass. Other options include six concerts and a 10 percent discount or four concerts and a five percent discount. The Chamber Series consists of the four chamber concerts for \$80 and the Jazz Band Series includes two jazz concerts for \$40. For complete details, visit lansingsymphony.org or call the LSO office at (517) 487-5001. ■



On Thursday, June 19, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce joined the **Greater Michigan Construction Academy** for the grand opening of their new Lansing facility. The new facility will now train workers in masonry and carpentry, in addition to their already established electrical, plumbing, and HVAC classes.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce joined TEAM Schostak Family Restaurants for the grand re-opening of **Wendy's®**. The 2,450-square-foot restaurant is located at 6620 S Cedar St. in Lansing and recently underwent significant renovations as part of TEAM Schostak's statewide image activation efforts for many of its 56 Wendy's locations. Improvements include a modern guest seating area, remodeled restrooms, an updated exterior, and a repaved parking lot.

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