

CONNECT

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May 2018

Feature:

Lighthouse Group



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Feature: Lighthouse Group.....	4
Expert Contributor: Farm Bureau Insurance.....	6
Expert Contributor: Shoreline Technology Solutions.....	8
The West Coast Chamber Celebrates Minority Business Champions.....	10
Members Making A Difference: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Works to Address Opioid Crisis.....	12
Profiles of Success: Lorina Freestone.....	13
Calendar of Events.....	14
Leveling Up: Metal Flow Becomes A New Gold Level Sponsor.....	15
Digital Marketing S.O.S.....	17
New Members.....	18
West Coast Cash Merchant Spotlight.....	20
Happenings at the Chamber.....	22

ADVERTISING INDEX

Andy Spears Farm Bureau Insurance.....	7
Baumann & DeGroot Heating & Cooling.....	11
Boer's Transfer and Storage.....	7
Bosch's Landscape.....	9
Buis Mattress & Bedroom Furnishings.....	19
Captivation Capital.....	18
City Flats Hotel.....	8
Custer, Inc.....	23
deVries Photography.....	22
Edify North.....	8
First National Bank.....	11
Floor Gear Unlimited.....	17
Gordon Water Systems.....	12
Guaranteed Rate.....	12
Holland Hospital.....	17
Holland Litho Printing Services.....	17
Hope College.....	21
Hospice of Holland.....	20
Lakewood Construction.....	21
Lighthouse Insurance Group.....	9
Macatawa Technologoes.....	22
Manpower.....	17
Mercy Health Partners.....	9
National LED Solutions.....	18
Navigate.....	11
Shoreline Technology Solutions.....	9
Suburban Inns.....	15
Town & Country Group.....	17
Wendy Ryder Sotheby's Intl. Realty.....	13
Yacht Basin Marina.....	22
Zeeland Lumber.....	7

Letter from Jane Clark

President, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce



Each issue of CONNECT features descriptions of new members that have joined the Chamber. In this issue you'll find 15 unique businesses, all of whom are just beginning to explore how Chamber membership will help their businesses succeed. We come alongside each one to introduce them to the incredible network of over 1,300 Chamber member businesses, and provide opportunities to partner them with the resources and relationships to grow their businesses.

Our feature article this month spotlights Lighthouse Group, an organization that prides itself on offering such a wide variety of services, that their customers quickly become repeat customers, knowing they've found a partner they can trust. At the Chamber, we spend each day making sure that the programs and services we offer to our members bring that same level of trust. Whether you'd like to attend an event, need help reaching an elected official, need help promoting your business or attracting talent, or simply need a recommendation for a product or service, the Chamber is here to make that happen.

Best Regards,
Jane Clark

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All content, unless otherwise noted, provided by the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce.

FEEDBACK/IDEAS/SUBMISSIONS

Have feedback, ideas, or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 5th of each month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas and photos to:
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cscott@bestversionmedia.com
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Feature:

Lighthouse Group

By Chelsea Scott

Images courtesy of Lighthouse Group



Lighthouse CEO Tom Helmstetter.

“Protection for where you are, guidance for where you’re going.”

Whether closing on a retail property, refinancing a warehouse, buying a second home or investing in life insurance, commercial insurance or employee benefits, Lighthouse Group has someone who can help. “Lighthouse Group is a trusted resource in managing risk and insurance needs. We provide solutions in the areas of benefits, business, life, personal and title insurance,” explained Recruiting Specialist Stephanie Tabor.

Lighthouse Group was established in 1995 in Holland, through the merging of Lighthouse Insurance Agency (founded in 1990) and Keuning Agency (founded in 1960). Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Lighthouse Group currently has nine Michigan locations, one Wisconsin location, and counting. “We like to call it being local everywhere,” said Bob Wuerfel, Certified Land Title Professional (CLTP) and Title President at Lighthouse Group.

“We understand that no two closings are alike,” he added. “As your trusted advisor, it is our responsibility to ensure you have the title coverage you need. When you work with Lighthouse Group, you benefit from our long list of individual products and services as well as the top-rate relationships we have with our five underwriters.”

Impressively, Lighthouse Title Group has handled over 100,000 title files since their formation. “Notable local projects include the transfer from the city to Hope College of the football stadium, working with a local bank on the downtown hotel that opened in 2016 as well as the land purchase by the city for the new power plant,” said Bob. “Our success wouldn’t be possible without dozens of shareholders, managers and leaders working together. I enjoy being part of a group that continues to evolve with forward visionary thinking, led by our Group/CEO Tom Helmstetter.”



Lighthouse Group team members giving back to their community.



Referrals and repeat customers indicate to Lighthouse Group that they are creating a positive client experience, but awards and recognition are another way to measure a company’s success. Lighthouse Group was proud to have been named Mentor Organization of the Year by the Grand Rapids Young Professionals in 2017 and the #1 Employee Benefits Consultants by the *Grand Rapids Business Journal* for the past five years. Stephanie added, “Our title team also received the Fidelity National Financial Circle of Excellence Award for the third year in a row last year.”

Lighthouse Group is committed to the communities they serve, and the team is dedicated to giving back. “We support and sponsor many non-profits and events,” Bob said. A few of the organizations/events Lighthouse Group supports include Boys and Girls Club of Grand Rapids, Kids Food Basket, the Tulip Time Festival and Ronald McDonald House of West Michigan. Stephanie added, “Over the past three years Lighthouse Group has given over half a million dollars to community organizations.” For the 20th anniversary, Lighthouse Group closed their offices and spent the day volunteering with different nonprofits in their respective areas. “We were all out there with our Lighthouse shirts on,” said Bob. “You’ll see us in our communities.”

Lighthouse Group headquarters are located at 4808 Broadmoor Ave SE in Grand Rapids but will be relocating to downtown Grand Rapids in late summer 2018. Their Holland location is 877 E 16th St. Find them online at www.lighthousegroup.net, www.facebook.com/lighthousegroupinsurancetitle/, www.instagram.com/_lighthousegroup/ and www.linkedin.com/company/362515/.



Lighthouse Group Certified Land Title Professional (CLTP) and Title President Bob Wuerfel.



Feeling Comfortable with Life Insurance

By Andy Spears, Farm Bureau Insurance

Life insurance is not a topic you use to strike up casual conversation. Any discussion about life insurance can involve topics that most people are unfamiliar with, might be a little complicated, or make us uncomfortable. But by not talking about it with your trusted insurance agent and taking time to plan, many families are left vulnerable financially if their breadwinner or caregiver passes away. Consider these facts:

- One in three households would have immediate trouble paying living expenses if the primary wage earner died.
- Forty-eight percent of households need more life insurance.
- 40% of people haven't bought life insurance or more of it because they're unsure of how much or what type to buy.
- More than 30 million Generation X and Y households said they needed more life insurance in 2012.
- One-third of wives own no life insurance at all.

(Source: LIMRA, 2016)

Many people don't purchase enough life insurance to cover their needs. Of those who do, many end up making critical mistakes by purchasing insurance that is not ideal for them. How can you decide if you need life insurance or what type of coverage is right for you?



Do you need life insurance? If you are young and without dependents, you may not need life insurance. If you plan on having dependents, it is a good idea to buy insurance when you are young and healthy. By doing so, you guarantee your insurability and lock in coverage at the lowest rate. On the other hand, you may also not need life insurance if you're older, have no dependents any longer, have enough money saved for retirement already, or don't plan on leaving any financial legacy behind after your death. If you don't need life insurance, that's great. If you do, how much do you need?

The appropriate amount: Most of the time, the appropriate level of life insurance coverage is calculated based on two things: 1) specific need or 2) income replacement. A needs-based approach examines the specific impact your death will have on your family (Does your spouse have a job? How many dependents do you

have? Is there enough for their education costs in the future? Do you have a mortgage?) These and other factors can help you determine the unique amount of life insurance you may need. Another common way to initially approach your life insurance need is to base it on your income. If, for example, you want to provide a legacy of 10 years of income, you multiply your annual income by 10, it's that simple. (You may also wish to account for inflation, too.)

Type of insurance: The two basic types of insurance are Term and Whole Life. On term insurance, you just decide how much coverage you need and the period of time you want that coverage to remain in effect. For example, if you've decided you want \$250,000 of coverage for 10 years. You simply buy a policy for the amount of coverage and span of time you want it. Term insurance has lower premiums than whole life insurance so you're

able to purchase the most amount of coverage for the lowest price, knowing it will be gone when the term ends. Some term insurance is convertible. This means you can convert the policy to permanent insurance, without any medical underwriting, so no matter what happens to your health, you can have a permanent policy to protect your family.

Whole Life is permanent insurance and comes in many varieties. The greatest advantages of whole life insurance is that its permanent, and the policy builds cash value and dividends. You also have the option of purchasing whole life insurance with a single payment. The cash values of a whole life policy are available to the policy owner via policy loans or if the policy is surrendered by the policy owner. With its strong guarantees, whole life insurance is good for the person who wants to be sure the policy is there, regardless of when death occurs.

Retirement or Estate Tool

An existing or new life insurance policy can also serve as a tool for families or business owners who wish to augment their future retirement income. Cash accumulation within the policy is tax deferred, similar to gains within a 401(k) or IRA. A life insurance policy can assure that estate owners avoid disputes by equalizing inheritances. This is especially

important in blended families, where a parent might worry about providing for a spouse while leaving inheritances for children from one or more marriages. It is also important when the estate contains illiquid assets (property, valuable heirlooms or a family business) that are difficult or impossible to divide. Because life insurance proceeds pass outside probate, inheritances go directly and immediately to the named beneficiaries. This simplifies and accelerates the distribution of assets in the event of a death and can be of great financial and emotional comfort to the family.

As you can see, the purchase of life insurance can provide

great emotional peace of mind and financial security. There are many options and specific considerations for each family or business situation. Many times, it helps to consult with an expert or trusted advisor to go over questions, options, and discover if life insurance is an appropriate option for your family or business..

Andy Spears owns a local insurance agency in the Holland area. His passion is to serve and provide protection and peace of mind to his clients. Andy can be reached at 616-396-3333, aspears@fbinsmi.com, or through his website - www.InsureWestMichigan.com.

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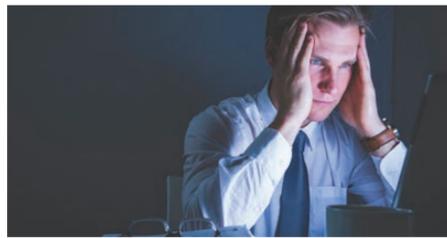


Why is Changing IT Companies So Hard?

By Mark Kolean, Shoreline Technology Solutions

One of my loyal clients of 13 years had a customer who mentioned they had lost over 12 years of history because of a server crash. The client helped me get an introduction to the customer; I of course was very grateful for the referral. I did my best to contact that account right away and set up a time to meet with them in person. In talking with this prospective new account, they mentioned that they were working with one of the large IT groups and they had purchased the best of everything. Not only did they have good equipment but also this prospect had monitoring services for backups, servers, workstations, etc. The prospect also mentioned that two of the drives in the server failed at the same time. Even though they had monitoring, somehow backup monitoring services were not included with that fee.

Even though all of these bad things happened to the prospective client, they still purchased a brand-new server, backup solution, and were about to sign a new three year contract for ongoing monitoring services with their current IT group. Upon learning all this I mentioned that maybe this IT group wasn't treating them that well, they did lose 12 years of data under



their watch. This small business has only 10 employees. At that size, it seems like the business must earn a large sum of money just to pay for all of the computers and servers the previous IT company wanted to sell them.

This kind of story is common. Many business owners purchase IT solutions out of fear, blindly accepting what the salesman on the other end is selling. I am guessing for many business owners it might be easier to keep a known bad IT group over hiring an unknown new IT group. If the new group doesn't know how something might be put together, it could mean either having to purchase more equipment the new group knows how to use, or else going back to the previous bad group and having to ask for help. At least this is the fear many business owners have about moving IT groups.

Here are some ideas if you would like to move from one IT group over to another:

- Ask other business owners for IT company recommendations.
- Meet with a new IT group and ask for them to draw out a work plan on what is required to move away from the current group.
- Have the new group go over the current set of equipment and ask them which IT equipment in the office they do not support and what would be their recommendation to fix that product if it had issues..

I have been in touch with the new prospective client and encouraged them to finish the server build they already agreed to purchase when the other one failed. They are also still waiting to see how much of the data they can recover of the 12 years lost. They will have to pay all of the fees to recover the data that was lost which could be 10s of thousands of dollars. I think they may have gone through enough pain that they may be ready to make a change.

Shoreline Technology Solutions is located at 828 Lincoln Avenue in Holland. Reach them by calling 616-394-1303 or visiting www.shorelinepc.com.

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The West Coast Chamber Celebrates Minority Business Champions

By Caroline Monahan

Each year, the West Coast Chamber recognizes outstanding Minority Businesses and Minority Business Champions, who serve as advocates, employers, and mentors to inspire and empower more growth of minority owned and operated businesses in our community. To support this award process, the Chamber reaches out to its members to nominate from within. The nominations highlight the diverse industries and professions from which the leadership by minorities in our business community can be found. From manufacturers to law and real estate firms to hospitality and service professions, our business community is rich in strong professionals and entrepreneurs.

Developing and championing leaders from within various sectors of the community is part of the West Coast Chamber's Leadership program, and this year, the program added a minority scholarship to place further emphasis on the intention of supporting the leadership of minorities in our community. Sponsored by Fifth Third Bank, the scholarship provides tuition for two individuals to attend the year-long leadership development program.

In 2017, the Chamber recognized Juanita Bocanegra and Dawn Garcia Ward as Minority Business Champions for building a network of Latina business professionals. Beginning as a duo getting together to support and share ideas, the women extended invitations to their informal meetings, and the twosome turned into a group that eventually



explore entrepreneurship, and offering programs to help new businesses learn the system are vital to the successful launch of an enterprise. Experienced counseling to help would-be business owners understand the costs of starting a business, the necessity of a business plan, and of how to obtain financing are tools that will help to set those inspired individuals up for success.

Says Tony Castillo of Milagro Six, "The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well" within our minority business community. The diversity of businesses and business ownership enhances the whole community, and, by extension, the Chamber. Members of the Holland / Zeeland business community make a point

"The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well" within our minority business community.

Tony Castillo, Milagro Six

found a home within the structure of the West Coast Chamber. Now known as the Professional Lakeshore Latinas, this network is over seventy women strong, holds quarterly meetings organized by the Chamber, and also exchanges ideas, opportunities, and encouragement via their social media group.

It is precisely this leadership by example that inspires others in the community to

of leaning on collaboration as a means to sustaining a strong economy, a trait that lends itself well to supporting growth opportunities in all sectors. Success breeds success, and as our area continues to see growth within our minority population, the opportunity exists to grow the positive economic impact on all.

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This is Ryan Kolff.

- He is an Installation Field Manager
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- Graduated from Holland Christian
- ACHR NEWS National Tech of the Month
- Is an expert in Hydronics and boiler work

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Works to Address Opioid Crisis

More than \$570,000 in grants will be given to nine organizations across Michigan to address the opioid epidemic. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, a member of the West Coast Chamber, along with the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and the Superior Health Foundation are working together to fuel the efforts to fight this crisis. The one-time grants being given will allow for communities to create programs that will emphasize prevention, treatment and support services.

“This joint effort is a major initiative designed to help community coalitions address the growing opioid epidemic impacting Michigan residents in every corner of our state,” said Daniel J. Loepp, President and Chief Executive Officer of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. “It’s imperative we turn our attention to the needs of the individuals and families being affected by this crisis.”

Prescription drug and opioid abuse has reached epidemic proportions in Michigan. The number of deaths from drug overdose has more than tripled from 1999 to 2015. Overall, 4,722 Michigan residents died from 2009 to 2012 due to unintentional or undetermined intent poisonings. This is a rate of 12.3 deaths per 100,000 residents. Of these overdose deaths, 19.4 percent were opioid-related. Not every overdose incident results in a death. Michigan hospitalizations involving opioids more than doubled from 2000 to 2011 from 9.2 to 20.4 per 10,000 population.

West Coast Chamber members receiving a grant include Lake-wood Family Medicine and Ottawa County Community Mental Health. This \$27,900 grant has established a task force that will provide training for high schoolers to increase awareness and understanding of the opioid crisis. This program will also create a physician led, multi-pronged strategy for reducing the rate of opiate misuse.

Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Care Network of Michigan is the West Coast Chamber’s Platinum Sponsor and has been a member since 1990.



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Profiles of Success: Lorma Freestone

By Anne Gaskin Nemschoff

Our community is blessed with an abundance of public art installations. From the whirling colors bookmarking 8th Street to the outstanding iron suns carrying you along River Avenue as you cross Lake Macatawa, seemingly each nook and cranny of this lovely small town is decorated with visual ornamentation. Rich in culture and creativity, Holland has always been rooted in art. Fifty years ago a small band of community members founded the Holland Area Arts Council to make sure there was art advocacy and education resources to lead our community forward. Everywhere you look in town you see the impact of that organization in our daily lives. At the helm of the Holland Area Arts Council for the last decade has been Lorma Freestone.

Lorma has been an artist her whole life. She came to Holland by way of Hope College. She was raised in the Reformed Church in New York and Hope often promoted itself within their church. While at Hope College, she met her now husband, Ken Freestone. The two ventured back East after graduation but when children came along, their longing for the easy ways of small town Midwestern living called them back to Holland.

Lorma worked for a few years in the costuming department for the Theater department at Hope College. She also worked as an artist out of her home. She built small theatrical sculptures which were very popular on the East coast. At the pinnacle of her sculptural work, she was asked to show her work as part of a doll expo at FAO Schwartz in New York.

The consummate entrepreneur, Lorma saw a new craze for decorative flags on the rise, so she started designing and selling flags. This also took off as a successful business. The work with the flags quickly translated into work with local businesses making flags for yachts, tradeshows and marketing materials. The increased work allowed Lorma to stay home with their growing family which ultimately consisted of two children. After some time, Lorma’s parents and brother moved to Holland, cementing it as home. As she wound down her flag business, she became more and more involved at the Arts Council. Her children frequented the arts education classes and her love of art was nurtured through the community she found within the organization. When an exhibits coordinator roll became available, she jumped at the chance to interview.

Since accepting that job, Lorma and the Holland Area Arts Council have become synonymous. Her kind enthusiasm and undying love of promoting the arts has propelled the Arts Council over the years, giving birth to many of the dance studios, art studios and public art assemblages which create the fabric of our community today. Lorma even rode through the storm of 2008 when non-profit funding became almost extinct but where arts organizations likely took the largest hit of all. She has helped reinvent the HAAC into the new organization it is today—lighter, nimbler and better equipped to serve the community’s needs.

“Art is a necessity both socially and economically for our community,” said Lorma. “We need to grow creative thinkers to create well rounded people and employees for the community’s future.”

This February, Lorma announced her retirement from her role at the Holland Area Arts Council. She will stay on as executive direc-



tor through June of 2018. “I decided to go out on a high note,” said Lorma. “It is a pleasure to see the organization in such a positive place. We have amazing staff, wonderful space and exciting programming.”

Lorma shared that her professional success came by accident, but that she wouldn’t have changed a thing. As she looks back on her life she thinks the best thing she ever did was to never fear what she didn’t know and to be brave enough to push beyond her capabilities by learning from others.

Anne Gaskin Nemschoff owns GaskinPR, a public relations and communications strategy firm. Anne specializes in strategic campaign development, media relations, crisis communications, community relations and event management. Past clients include: McDonald’s, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Cisco Systems, Johnsonville Sausage, Kohler Company and numerous other national brands. Contact Anne at anne@gaskinpr.com.

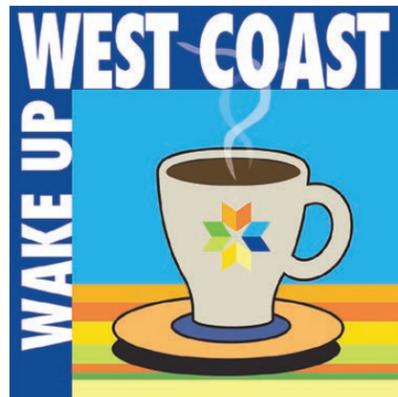
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Tuesday, May 1, 2018
Chamber CONNECT Groups Quarterly Gathering
 @West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland MI, 49423
 All Chamber CONNECT group members are invited to attend the upcoming quarterly CONNECT Group Gathering on Tuesday, May 1st from 8-9:30am. At this upcoming event, you will have the chance to network with other CONNECT group members, hear an update from the Chamber and have the chance to hear from a presenter on a relevant topic.
 Time: 8-9:30am
 Cost: FREE

Thursday, May 3, 2018
Professional Lakeshore Latinas Meeting
 @West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland MI, 49423
 The Professional Lakeshore Latinas' mission is fostering relationships and empowering Latinas through advocacy, service, and professional development. Please join us at our next meeting for networking and the opportunity to hear from a guest speaker. Beverages and light hors d'oeuvres will be provided.
 Time: 5:30-7:30pm
 Cost: FREE



Tuesday, May 8, 2018
Wake Up West Coast
 @Haworth Inn & Conference Center, 225 College Ave, Holland
 Contractors, like most other businesses, are thought of as a commodity, with little setting them apart from others. Elzinga & Volkers has been on a 10+ year journey to create a unique company; one that clearly stands out and is "unmistakably" different from its competitors. Presenter, Mike Novakoski with E&V will offer a glimpse of some of the innovative beliefs, ideas and programs they have developed that

have help E&V stand out and prepare them for a bright future of growth and continued regional and national recognition.
 Time: 7:30 - 8:30am
 Cost: \$20 per Chamber member (\$25 if registered after May 6) / \$35 per non-member



Thursday, May 10, 2018
Leading Edge: Get Found on Google
 @West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland MI, 49423
 This presentation introduces Google My Business, a free tool to manage your business information across Google. Your Google My Business listing is how you get found on maps and search, and it's the easiest way to help your business be found online. Did you know that businesses with updated GMB listings are two times more likely to be considered reputable and 38% more likely to have searchers visit the location? Learn how customers find your business online and how to promote your online presence using a variety of digital tools like SEO, social media, email and online advertising. In fact, 76% of people who search on their smartphones for something nearby visit a business within a day. We also introduce tools to help you run your business online, including Google Analytics, Google Trends, Google Alerts and more.
 Time: 8:30-11am
 Cost: \$55 per member / \$35 for each additional attendee from the same company / \$75 per non-member /

Friday, May 11, 2018
Public Policy Committee Meeting
 @West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland
 Interested in governmental and political issues? The Public Policy Committee reviews issues of local and regional concern and makes position recommendations to the Board of Directors. Join us monthly for interesting and sometimes lively discussion about the issues that affect you and your business.
 Time: 8-9:30am
 Cost: FREE

Monday, May 21, 2018
Governmental Affairs Breakfast
 @Alpenrose Restaurant, 4 E 8th Street, Holland MI, 49423
 Maximize the opportunity to connect with your elected officials! Join us for breakfast with our elected state and federal legislators. Ample time is provided for questions and answers. Arrive at 7:15am for a brief networking session before the breakfast begins.
 Time: 7:30 - 8:30am
 Cost: \$20 per Chamber member / \$25 if registered after May 18 / \$35 per non-member



Wednesday, May 23, 2018
Network @ Lunch
 @City on a Hill, 100 Pine Street, Suite 175, Zeeland MI, 49464
 You have to eat, right? Get to know other business representatives by spending an hour with them over a relaxing business lunch. You will also be assigned dining partners from other businesses at the event, giving you the opportunity to make new contacts and share about yourself and your business. What could be easier?
 Time: 12-1pm
 Cost: \$20 per Chamber Member / \$30 per Non-member

Wednesday, May 30, 2018
West Coast Leadership Alumni Community Project
 @West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland
 This year's Leadership class wants to leave a legacy and would like to include Alumni in this process. Join us to discuss ideas and create a plan for how we can come together to make this project a success for our community?
 Time: 3-4:30pm
 Cost: FREE

For a full listing of events, visit www.westcoastchamber.org/events.

Leveling Up: Metal Flow Becomes A New Gold Level Sponsor

By Annika Smeenge

Metal Flow Corporation was founded in 1978 by Marc and Curt Brown, as a father and son venture. Thirty years later, the company now employs 275 employees in West Michigan and another 20 employees in its first international operation in Wuxi, China. Known in their industry for being innovators, Metal Flow helps customers engineer the highest quality product in a cost-effective way.



Recently, Metal Flow's investment and growth has extended to focus on enhancing the company's apprenticeship program as well as creating new training opportunities for team members to advance their skillsets and craftsmanship. Additionally, the Metal Flow team has supported successful transitions in recent months, including bringing Kelly Springer into the

President and CEO role. Springer, who was the recipient of the 2017 Lakeshore Athena Award, is also a member of the Chamber Board of Directors.

A member of the West Coast Chamber since 1983, Metal Flow Corporation became a Gold Sponsor in January of 2018. This decision reflects their dedication to being a community trustee that offers excellent career opportunities for team members, and strives to support other organizations in the community that are working to make the west coast a community of choice. In May, Metal Flow will once again sponsor one of the community's favorite annual events, the Tulip Time Volksparede.

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Digital Marketing S.O.S.

By Caroline Monahan

4 in 5 consumers use search engines to find local information.



Google expert Erin Bemiss.

A frequent topic that our members request for educational programming is Digital Marketing. Innovation in technology is ever evolving, and formulating a plan to communicate with customers has become as complicated as learning the new tech trends and platforms themselves. Taking an inventory of the digital spectrum will reveal that a business is likely utilizing email marketing, managing a website, and operating on any number of social media platforms, as well as creating the content needed to make that digital presence meaningful. After all of those pieces are assembled, the project turns to planning them, managing them, and following with analytics that will measure how well they are working. Also, you have to run your business.

It's no wonder this is a topic that has may crying out for help. This spring and summer bring several opportunities for Chamber members to learn more about how to make their digital marketing successful. All of the following events can be found on the Chamber website.

When someone does a Google search, does your business turn up on the first page? In May, Google expert Erin Bemiss returns to teach a workshop on how to be sure your

business is found on Google. The last time she joined us, Erin taught a sold-out class on creating effective subject lines for email marketing, and many attendees shared with us that it was transformative for their email communications. Click rates and open rates went up! Now Erin is a specialist for Google and knows all the ins and outs of how to make sure your website is running as effectively as it can, and can help you troubleshoot if it's not. She's a real wizard.

In June we move from website to social media. Tim Haines of Symposia Labs brings his own contagious energy to our Chamber members and teaches his Digital Marketing Summer Session – Mastering Facebook and Instagram. How are you using your social media to reach customers? Being a thought leader and creating a positive relationship with your customers is just as important, if not more so, than trying to sell them something. But you still need to sell, right? Do you have a budget for social media advertising? Should you? Tim teaches how to effectively and efficiently plan your content and your advertising budget, and how to track its effectiveness.

DIGITAL MARKETING SUMMER SESSIONS

Digital programming in August turns to email marketing and CRM. CRM? What is that? Customer Relationship Management is a technology for managing all your company's relationships and interactions with customers and potential customers. When people talk about CRM, they are usually referring to a CRM system, a tool that helps with contact management, sales management, productivity, and more. There are any number of ways to keep in touch with your customers and "guide" them through your sales funnel and tapping into that technology opens up opportunities for growing your customer base and your bottom line.

The Chamber is also home to several digital marketing members, all with a broad spectrum of knowledge to help businesses build plans that are both meaningful, and manageable, regardless of the resources a business has to expend on their digital marketing. Take the time this summer to make sure you are communicating as effectively as you can be. We've got the resources to help you make that happen.

Go to www.westcoastchamber.org to register for all of these events.

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Big Lake Brewing Company

Travis Prueter
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Biglakebrewing@gmail.com
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Big Lake Brewing started as the brainchild of three engineers, two of which were devoted home brewers for years. With an emphasis on quality ingredients, consistent recipes, and a passion for quality control, the company grew into the 7000 square foot brewery and full kitchen that it is today. Big Lake Brewing is passionate about good beer, and you should be too.

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Clatter Creative Promotions is a woman-owned, promotional marketing firm providing branded merchandise and apparel designed to reach your target market. They understand that every marketing campaign and event is unique and will work side by side with you (or your team) to exceed your desired results.

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Gezelligheid, LLC

Trish Kamer
616-377-2699
Gezelligheidllc@gmail.com
www.gezelligheidllc.com

Gezelligheid is a new event venue opening soon in Holland, Michigan. "Gezelligheid" is a Dutch word meaning "cozy", "fun", "nice atmosphere". This 2,000 sq. ft. space is available for rent for your business or personal needs. The space offers six different layout styles that can be used for anything from business meetings to weddings.

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Tim Hamilton
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Tim@hamiltondesign.com
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At Hamilton AV Design it is their job to help you communicate better. With more than 20 years working in

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Holland Town Center, Inc.

Taylor Blagrove
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Taylor@edwardsrealtyco.com
www.hollandtowncenter.com

Located in beautiful Holland, Michigan, The Holland Town Center is being revitalized into a vibrant neighborhood within the community. Repurposing the existing buildings into a functioning neighborhood rich with shops, restaurants, a community garden, and friendly people, the goal of the Holland Town Center is to be a gathering place for individuals, families, and businesses.

James A Cook Builders

Lisa Cook
616-393-9300
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www.jamescookbuilders.com

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Langhorst Family Dentistry

Sarah Langhorst
Sarah.langhorst@gmail.com
Langhorst Family Dentistry is a new family practice that will be opening up this summer. Dr. Sarah Langhorst is using her year of experience to start this family oriented practice.

MA Logistic INC

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Malogisticsinc@charter.net
MA Logistics provides transportation to the West Michigan Area.

Macatawa Bay Junior Association

Nick Hovland
616-796-8671
Nick@mbja.org
www.mbj.org
Learn-to-sail instruction is only one of the valuable services Macatawa Bay Junior Sailing Association provides. They also field "Team Macatawa" (a sailing team that competes in regional events during the summer) and maintain their fleet of Optimist Dinghies, Club 420's, Lasers, and a J22 keel-boat.

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Jeff Nowak
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West Coast Cash Merchant Spotlight

By Annika Smeenge

Being a prominent supplier of all things baby and mom, Ecobuns is an important part of the growing West Michigan community. They also decided that utilizing the West Coast Cash program, provided by the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce, would boost their connection to the community around them. Being a West Coast Cash Merchant has helped draw customers to their store because they are listed as a participating business. The program has also sparked conversation among the Ecobuns staff about the importance of supporting local businesses.

Ecobuns has used their membership with the West Coast Chamber in other ways too, like being a part of the new 424 affinity group. This group provides businesses along the US North 31 corridor with an opportunity to develop relationships and build a stronger community while growing their businesses. At Ecobuns they appreciate the emphasis the West Coast Chamber puts on networking, learning, and growing local economies.

Ecobuns recently celebrated their 5th year of business, and they are excited to continue to expand their baby registry services and offer more products to the families that shop with them. They also will be hosting a summer cookout in June for their customers. This is a fun event for families to connect with each other and with Ecobuns.



Pictured: Ecobuns staff.

What is West Coast Cash?

It's the community currency program designed to keep shopping local and support the businesses that form the fabric of our community. Certificates are conveniently purchased online at the West Coast Chamber website. There's no need to leave home or work to shop. Once ordered, purchasers simply print the certificates or email them to a recipient, and then it's time to shop. There is a complete list of participating merchants on the website, all of whom are looking forward to seeing traffic in their businesses. Certificates make great gifts for teachers, staff, students, and anyone else who would have fun shopping for their own special treat.

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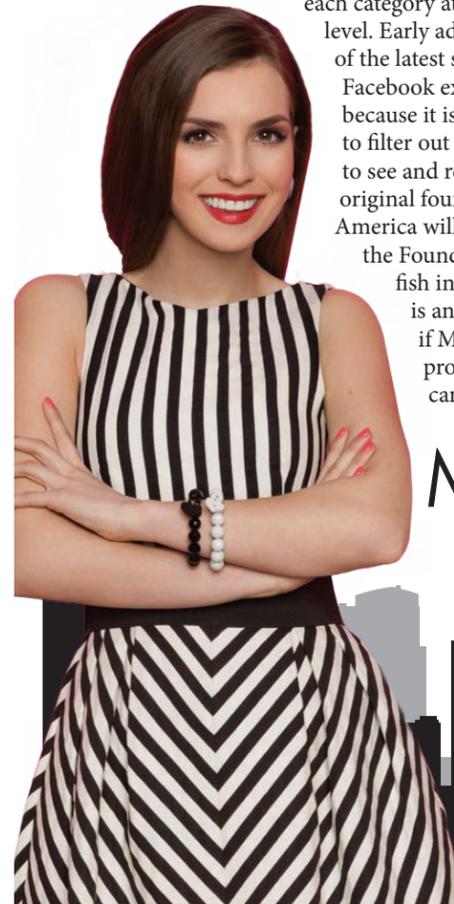
Is Breaking Up with Facebook Hard to Do?

By Emma Riehl

With all the negative press about Facebook, people are asking, "What's the alternative?" While some followers will never leave Facebook, others are looking for a place to go. Most ask, "If I leave, where do I go and will my friends come with me?" We all know the stories of networks such as Instagram that became overnight sensations. However, most social networks are built by early adopters who bring their friends along with them, and then grow slowly over time. This creates a personalized vibe and makes the space even more attractive. Take Nextdoor for example, the social network devoted to neighbor-to-neighbor communication in a tight-knit geographical area. Nextdoor is not a Facebook alternative based on its exclusive appeal to neighborhoods, but it serves as a solid metaphor for growth. Nextdoor launched in 2010. By social network standards, Nextdoor grew incredibly slowly. Despite that, Nextdoor became one of the few tech companies to be valued at \$1 billion without earning any revenue because the number of people networking on the platform eventually added up, one neighbor at a time.

Great movements develop over time because a social network's longevity and profitability depend on worthwhile, trusting relationships between its users and the network itself. Recently, Myopolis, a very viable alternative to Facebook, subtly and quietly opened their doors offering Citizens (like "friends") the chance to become pioneers of their community and build trust amongst one another. Citizens sound off on topics they care about and are heard by others who care about the same topics. The Leaderboard is a

popular component because it shows the leader in each category at the Local, State and National level. Early adopters will be at the forefront of the latest social movement. The problems Facebook experienced will likely be void because it is centered on the user's ability to filter out what they do and do not want to see and read. A cool bonus is that the original founder of every town in North America will be noted in Myopolis records as the Founder. Now is the time to be a BIG fish in a smaller pond until Myopolis is an ocean. At that point, we will see if Myopolis can stay ahead of the problems Facebook faces today. One can hope.



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Happenings at the Chamber



First National Bank of Michigan's Ribbon Cutting.



First 424 Affinity Group meeting.



Hope College students up early for Wake Up West Coast.



Making new connections at Power Breakfast.



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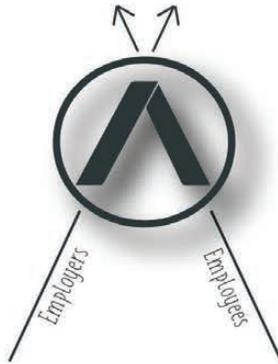
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