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October 2018



Feature:

## Three Local Entrepreneurs Tell Their Stories

*Pictured:  
Francé Allen,  
Jeff Robinson,  
Jeff Mass.*



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#### PUBLICATION TEAM

PUBLISHER: Patrick Avery  
CONTENT COORDINATOR: Chelsea Scott  
DESIGNER: Donna Johnson  
COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: deVries Photography

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**Chelsea Scott**, Content Coordinator, *Connect*:  
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**Caroline Monahan**, Director of Marketing and Communications, West Coast Chamber:  
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# Letter from Jane Clark

President, Michigan West Coast  
Chamber of Commerce



This fall we have the unique opportunity to host our members in a beautiful new space as we celebrate another year of making connections to help your businesses grow and succeed. We hope that attending the grand reopening of our newly renovated Civic Center as part of the Chamber community will leave our members the distinctive memory of "I was there when the new jewel of downtown Holland was unveiled, and it was a truly remarkable experience."

Our Annual Meeting is our largest event of the year, and yet it is one of the over 200 events per year that provide opportunities to connect, to learn and to promote businesses. Pair these events with our intentional focus on providing the best customer experience possible, and you discover why our Chamber is one of the less than 1% of Chambers in the country that are 5-Star Accredited. We spent the summer working on implementing innovative ways to engage with our members to be sure we are providing the best value, and are grateful that you continue to support our strong Chamber and to place your trust in us to be your partner in business.

Best Regards,  
Jane Clark

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Feature:

# Three Local Entrepreneurs Tell Their Stories

By Chelsea Scott

The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in West Michigan. There is much to be learned from those who blaze their own trail, push forward in the face of steep financial risk and uncertainty and come out on the other side with a successful product, innovative service and thriving business. This month, we talked to three entrepreneurs who were gracious enough to share their journeys.



*Jonathan Vail, Mark Ebels, Jeff Mass*

## Jeff Mass, Diverse Dimensions

Diverse Dimensions Founder and CEO Jeff Mass completed his undergraduate degree in manufacturing engineering technology from Ferris State University and holds a master's degree in quality engineering from Eastern Michigan University. After a long career in the automotive industry and the office furniture industry, Jeff founded Diverse Dimensions in 2003, with just one piece of equipment and a garage as a lab.

The company, which celebrates 15 years in business this year, is a metrology services firm that offers dimensional inspection and reverse engineering services to clients worldwide. They also offer on campus services as well as hardware and software training for the metrology industry at their lab in Zeeland.

Mass had the original goal of being a “one-man show” until demand proved that was not to be. “A natural growth progression in client base and services came from perseverance, hard work and hours of prayer seeking God’s direction on this

small business,” he said. “Now we have nine technicians and multiple pieces of measurement and laser scanning equipment to handle nearly every measurement challenge that comes our way.”

One of the natural progressions is the introduction of industrial (computed tomography) CT scanning services. “This service will be useful for verifying the integrity of internal components, materials or dimensions with non-destructive X-ray inspection as well as 3D CT scanning,” Jeff explained. “It is the most advanced X-ray inspection technique available in the industry.” The equipment is being delivered this month but Diverse Dimensions has been in full motion on training and marketing this service for some time. “To stay on the cutting edge of inspection technology with hardware and software has always been a goal of mine since the beginning of the business,” Jeff stated, “and this equipment and service is evidence of that.”

Looking back on the last 15 years, Jeff described the journey as fun: “I even tell my daughters that I would do this job for free, if that was a possibility. I also tell them that

I couldn’t imagine setting up this business in any other location than west Michigan. We have such a solid manufacturing base and a genuine community of support that is built on relationships.” That community of support includes the West Coast Chamber, which Jeff referred to as, “a great resource when it comes to educational and networking events. We attend those events when our busy schedule allows, but one event that we won’t miss is the golf outing. It’s always a good time for the techs to unwind with other members of the chamber community.”

When it comes to what Jeff finds rewarding, the answer is simple. “I absolutely love it when my clients see the benefit from the service and we solve their dimensional issues efficiently and effectively or even help them through challenges in the prototype development phase of their products,” he said.

Jeff is adamant that Diverse Dimensions is only possible because of the support of his wife. “Julie has always been the voice of reason and reality that keeps my feet on the ground,” he said.

[www.diversedimensions.com](http://www.diversedimensions.com)



Photos by deVries Photography



Francé Allen

## Francé Allen, Ventura Manufacturing

Francé Allen's journey from a girl living in the ghetto of Reynosa, Mexico to the CEO of Ventura Manufacturing is nothing short of remarkable. Educated in the "school of hard knocks" and driven by the knowledge that God put her on the planet for a reason, Francé dug herself out of a life of destitution by hard, honest work at a series of jobs where she was paid little or nothing and soaking up every bit of knowledge she could along the way. Raised by her "Gueli" (maternal grandmother), whom Francé refers to as the, "wisest uneducated woman I ever met," she came to know that, "God made it possible for me to do things in the world through the talents he blessed me with."

Unmatched persistence and a "yes" attitude to every opportunity eventually saw Francé in Holland, MI (by way of Iowa and Wisconsin) working at a blueberry farm and living at the City Mission. The owner of the farm, after being impressed with how she reorganized the blueberry packaging warehouse, helped her get a job at Prince Corporation. "What a blessing it was to work for Prince," she said with gratitude. "Mr. Edgar Prince built a company the way I believe my grandma would have done if she founded it today." The opportunity arose to start Ventura Manufacturing and Francé seized it.

Ventura Manufacturing is a manual/semi-automated assembly company whose core products include office chairs and chair mechanisms, interior and exterior automotive trim and electrical power distribution. Ventura has locations in the US, Mexico, Hungary and China, with annual sales that exceed 100 million and approximately 500 team members globally. "Ventura began 20 years ago in Zeeland, MI, when I started a 500 foot operation, leasing space from Innotec," Francé described. "I have been entrusted to steward Ventura and over the years, I have continued to function in the role of CEO. As you can imagine, that role has changed often over the 20 years."

At Ventura, continuous innovation is the name of the game, and Francé said they are driven by the unwavering desire to create a better solution. All with the end goal to better serve their customer. "We do more than solve problems; we uncover fresh opportunities for breaking new ground, using change as a powerful catalyst for innovation and improvement," she described. "Sharing our ideas openly along the way, we design advanced systems and efficient processes to resolve our customers' issues, meet requirements and significantly upgrade quality and speed to market."

When asked what sets Ventura apart, Francé was quick credit a dedicated team working in a positive environment with shared values. "Values like *trust, humility, service to our customers, fun, forgiveness, and learning*

shape who we are and how we function," she explained.

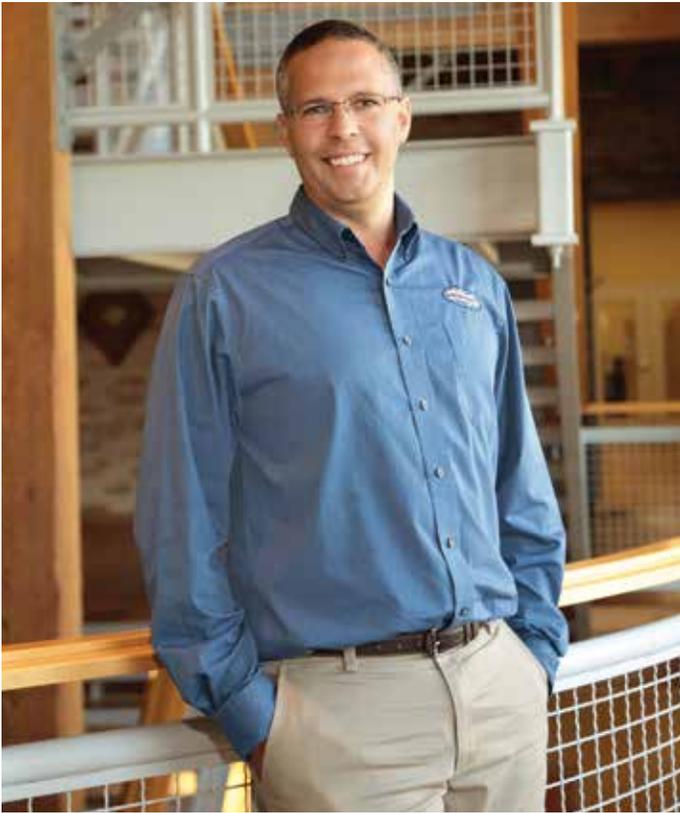
Giving back to the community is another important value to Ventura, said Francé. "One important way to use our resource of time is by sharing our gifts and talents with both local and global organizations which have similar values and objectives," she said. "Our employees are encouraged to spend up to one week (compensated) each year on supporting these organizations." Habitat for Humanity, Convoy of Hope, Boys and Girls Club, Camp Sunshine, Holland Rescue Mission and 70x7 Life Recovery are just a few organizations with which Ventura is involved.

Ventura is a member of the West Coast Chamber, with Francé serving on the Board. She was also nominated for the 2017 Small Business Person of the Year Award.

Francé said her passion was and still is to, "grow into a life of purpose, knowing well we are all a work in progress in need of one another to become whole," she said. "My identity is not from being considered a successful business woman. I feel I am on the journey of a life of purpose and that can be accomplished even without a business. This just happens to be the vehicle I am blessed to steward today. And trust me, it is an eternal roller coaster."

[www.venturamfg.com](http://www.venturamfg.com)

 Continued on page 6



Jeff Robinson

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### Jeff Robinson, AllRout

Co-owner of AllRout, Inc. Jeff Robinson said his journey to entrepreneurship started with a good work ethic that began at age 14. “I started out caring for greens and cleaning golf carts,” he said. “I learned very early the importance of hard work and the success that came to those who put in extra effort.” At just 18, Jeff was dreaming of launching his own business. “My grandfather owned a construction company and it was my goal to follow somewhat in his footsteps and launch a wood-based CNC company,” he shared. “Through much hard work, many sleepless nights, and a whole lot of faith, my uncle and I started AllRout in 2003 in the actual warehouse where my grandpa’s construction company was based. In a few short years, we outgrew that building and relocated to a new 12,000 ft building in Zeeland.”

AllRout, a full service CNC routing shop, strives to use up and coming programming techniques to provide end customers with precise pieces, timely service, and a positive business relationship. “We strive to demonstrate a Christ-like servant heart in all our business relationships,” Jeff added.

After graduating from Zeeland High School in 1998, Jeff went on to earn his associates degree in manufacturing tooling from Grand Rapids Community College. Jeff is

passionate about educating youth about the manufacturing sector, with the message that his story can be their story, too. “I continue to partner with Zeeland High School and their wood shop class and even helped my former teacher obtain a CNC router to teach high school students CAD/CAM,” he said. “A great living can be made in manufacturing with as little a two-year degree. It’s a great ROI.”

Jeff’s promotion of manufacturing in school, reputation of taking on the most challenging projects and leadership in the industry are among the reasons he recently received the Wood Industry 40 Under 40 award from Woodworking Network. He also received the award for Most Distinguished Alumni in the state for Phi Theta Kappa 2001.

AllRout became a Chamber member because of Jeff’s desire to connect with other local business owners that had the same challenges he had. “I feel my business has improved by being part of the Chamber because of the new business and personal relationships I have formed by attending events,” he said. Jeff is also part of the Manufacturing Affinity Group, which he cited as a way he’s been able to learn from many large manufacturers in the area. “I like to learn what works and doesn’t work for them,” he said.

Over the last 15 years, Jeff has learned that running a successful business comes down to relationships. “If you surround yourself with positive and loyal vendors/customers, you all can work together as a team to succeed,” he said. And his advice for aspiring entrepreneurs? “Give it a try. You’ll never know how far you can go unless you take the first step,” he said. “My best advice to a new business owner is to make sure you like running a business as much as you like doing the service or manufacturing the product.”

Jeff said AllRout’s goal for the future is to remain an industry leader while positively impacting their team and community, a holistic approach to business that his grandfather would be proud of. He reflected, “My grandfather is truly my greatest inspiration. I learned so much from him—from practical things like tying a tie and baiting a hook to the importance of faith and the characteristics of a real gentleman. From a business man perspective, he taught me the true meaning of a handshake, the importance of an honest business deal, and how hours and hours of sweat and hard work can bring you success.”

[www.allrout.com](http://www.allrout.com)

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# Emergency vs. Urgent Care

By Lesli Casten, MD



**W**hen you or a family member is sick or injured, you typically are faced with the daunting decision of calling your family doctor or seeking care at a local urgent care or emergency room (ER). How do you know which one to choose? Severity of illness, timing and cost can all play an important role in this decision.

Your primary care physician (PCP) should be your first call in non-emergent situations. Your doctor knows you and your health history, including medications you are taking and what chronic conditions might need to be considered in your treatment.

If you are unable to get an appointment with your PCP or need care outside of regular office hours, urgent care centers are good options. Staying within the same

health system as your PCP also helps to streamline access to your health records. Copays for a PCP or urgent care visit will also be less than going to the ER for non-emergent situations, and wait times can also be far shorter.

**Q: Are there differences between visiting an ER vs. Urgent Care?**

**A:** There are differences when it comes to choosing Urgent Care or Emergency Care for your immediate health care needs. Knowing them can save you time and money and ensure that you are receiving the right level of care.

**Q: When should you use Urgent Care?**

**A:** Urgent Care centers are designed to handle a variety of conditions, illnesses

and injuries that need to be treated right away **but are not life-threatening**. Urgent Care is a good place to receive care after hours, on holidays or when your Primary Care provider isn't available. Urgent Care physicians will treat the problem then recommend follow-up with your Primary Care doctor or nurse.

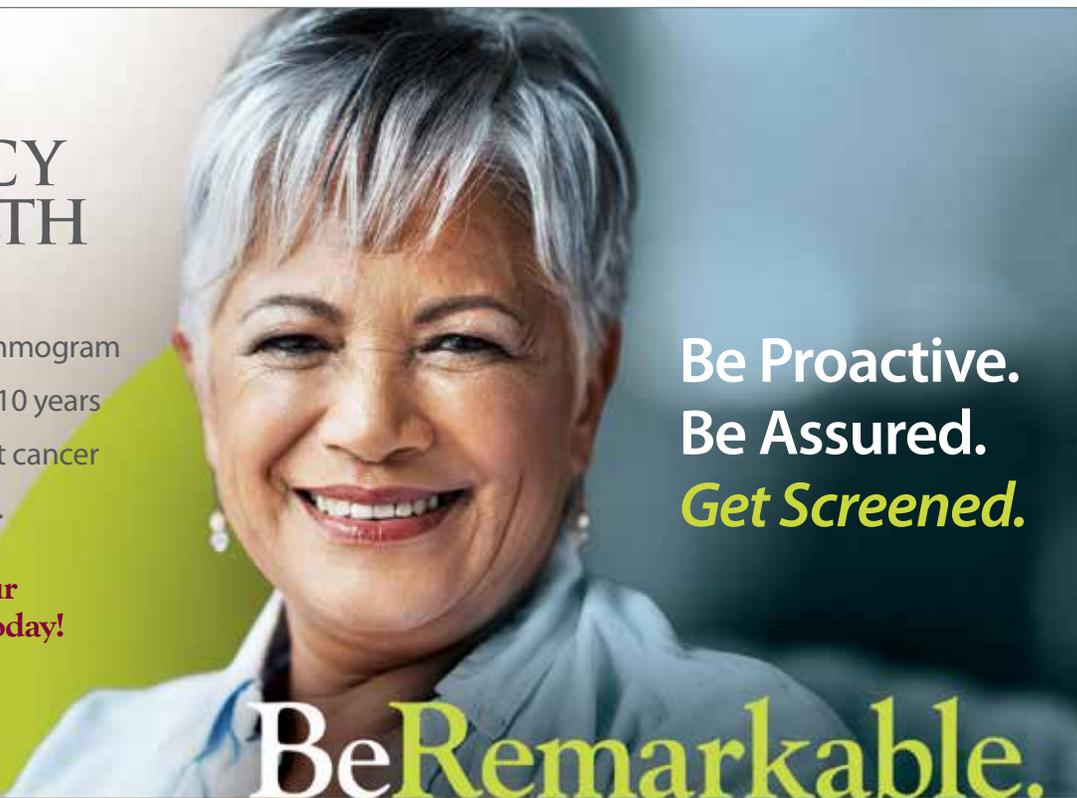
**Go to Urgent Care for:**

- Bladder infections
- Bug bites or small animal bites
- Cold and flu symptoms
- Ear pain
- Lower back pain
- Minor burns
- Minor lacerations
- Pink eye or other minor eye problems
- Rashes



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- Sprains or minor injuries
- Throat pain
- Tooth pain

**Q: When should you go to an Emergency Room (ER)?**

**A:** Emergency Care is meant for serious medical conditions for which delaying care could cause **permanent harm or even death**. If you or a family member experiences such a condition, it's important to seek immediate care at an ER or by calling 9-1-1. Emergency responders are trained to react quickly and transport you to the facility that best meets your needs.

**Visit an ER for:**

- Allergic reaction
- Babies needing immediate care
- Breathing problems
- Broken bones
- Chest pain
- Drug overdose or poisoning
- Extreme pain, especially if the cause is unknown
- Heart attack symptoms
- High fevers



- Loss of consciousness
- Rapid bleeding
- Seizures
- Severe abdominal pain
- Severe burns
- Serious eye or head injury
- Stroke symptoms
- All falls (for seniors)

**Q: Are there other signs to look for?**

**A:** Signs of a possible stroke should alert you to go to the ER, **preferably by ambulance:**

- Sudden numbness, tingling, weakness or loss of movement in your face, arm or leg,

- especially on only one side of your body
- Sudden vision changes
- Sudden trouble speaking
- Sudden confusion or trouble understanding simple statements
- Sudden problems with walking or balance
- A sudden, severe headache that is different from past headaches

**Q: When should you call 9-1-1?**

**A:** It's better to be safe than sorry. If you are experiencing an emergency, call 9-1-1. If you are in doubt, please call 9-1-1. Do not drive if you are having severe chest pain or severe bleeding, if you feel like you might faint or if your vision is impaired. Taking an ambulance is safer because paramedics can deliver life-saving care *on the way* to the hospital.

*For free flyers about when to 1) see a doctor, 2) go to Urgent Care or 3) go to an Emergency Room, please contact Mercy Health Physician Partners Holland North by calling 616-685-7450 or stop by at 3290 N Wellness Dr. #220 in Holland.*

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# Creativity— Change The Way You See It

By Sarah Brummels

I'm pretty sure I could be a billionaire if I had a dollar for the amount of times I have lived this scene:

Enter a kind, conversational human. Kind human gives a quick shrug of the shoulders lets out a hopeless sigh and says:

"I wish I was creative. But I don't have a creative bone in my body." *Or,*

"I can't even draw a stick figure." *Or,*

"I always thought it would be fun to be creative."

Oh, kind human... you are creative. Creativity is not what you make, it's what you see.

Every single person on this planet has in their lifetime, been creative. Creativity isn't a zen mindset for the select few. You don't have to go by the name Willow and walk around in paint-crust-ed overalls to be creative.

Let's remind ourselves of the definition of this elusive and often-desired attribute:

*"[Creativity is] the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination."*

Simplify some of these fancy words and you'll see that creativity is, simply put, the way you view the world. I'd even say that the way we live

our days is inherently creative. Your choices and actions are, in fact, creative. But somehow our days begin to feel so routine, so mundane and very much lacking creativity.

So how do we bring more creativity to our daily lives? If creativity is how we view the world, perhaps we should adjust our vision and change what we see. Try to do a little something each day that challenges you, and watch what happens. By changing even one little moment each day, you are opening up your life to new experiences, and those moments will inspire and shape you in new ways. Try a new coffee shop, take a different route to work, smile and say hi to a stranger. All these little things shape you and how you see the world.

Today I decided to change how I got to work: I rode my bike. I packed the laptop in a backpack, threw on sneakers, stole my kid's helmet and went off for a morning adventure to work.

Riding your bike really isn't that creative though. Or is it? Taking the same route to work on a bike instead of in a car was completely new and different. I noticed a beautiful small trail and bridge that I pass by every day but had never noticed before. I heard a cadence of sounds I never experience in my car.

I "transcended traditional rules, patterns, relationships, or the like..." And I definitely had to get really creative when I

arrived at work unprepared for the hot sweaty mess that I was.

Tiny shifts in your day and your patterns can birth endless opportunities for creativity. So think of that today. If you're cooking dinner and the sun is setting, stop, slip outside and watch the sunset from your deck. Take five minutes and experience that moment differently. You may see a shade of orange you've never seen, and seeing the world with new fresh eyes is the purest form of creativity.



*Sarah is Co-founder and Creative Strategist for Navigate.*



*Marketing shouldn't feel like throwing mud against the wall.*



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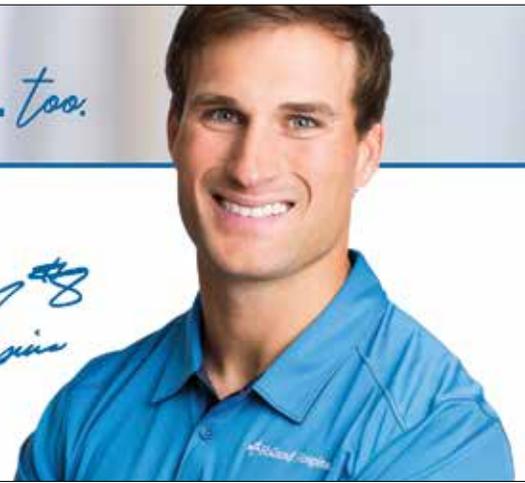
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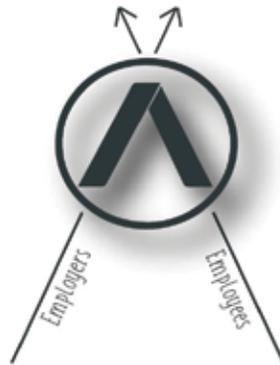


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# Safe and Sound

By Casey Veersma, Town & Country Group

**I**mprove your employees.  
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When you think about developing your employees through this optic, does your safety culture come to mind? Maybe it should. Sound businesses are Safe businesses.

I have enjoyed working in construction for over 20 years, as an electrician in the construction industry I have witnessed many times when Safety has taken a back seat to productivity. If I'm honest, I have seen it take a back seat to fashion, comfort, peer pressure, money, and more. It was often seen as a negative or a box that had to be checked.

I have come to embrace safety as so much more than that. Safety is quickly becoming who we are as a company. The byproduct of doing safety right is, you get a lot of other things right along the way.

### Safety builds Trust!

As an employee, knowing and believing that Safety is more important than profit... That getting the job done safely is the only way jobs should be done. Employees feel valued above profit. They begin to understand that they are part of a company that truly cares for them and their families. Empowering employees to be safe, knowing management has their backs builds trust. Trust has to be earned. It has to be real and measured. Safety done right is the building block of trust. A new hire orientation that includes safety training will sow the seeds of trust from day one. As safety is reinforced throughout their career, trust continues to grow.



### Safety builds TEAM:

The difference between success and failure on a football team can come down to one player not executing their job. Safety is the same way. We need to know the playbook and we need to execute. Everyone executing on the field brings success to the TEAM! Before ever setting foot on a customers site, instructions for execution must be relayed. With a successful game plan and execution everybody wins. This only happens with teamwork. It starts at the top and works its way down to your newest employee.

### Safety builds Productivity:

There are no surprises when safety is part of that plan. The better you plan for a job the smoother it will run. Safety is no different. Many times people account for the nuts and bolts of a project, they build a great game plan with their team, only to show up on a site and watch it all unravel because they forgot to consider what safety hazards may exist. Being able to forecast these hazards will greatly maximize your profits.

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willing to invest in the process I believe you will find your business to be Safe and Sound.

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# Our EOS Journey

By Caroline Monahan

The West Coast Chamber follows the strategy and practices of EOS, the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), sourced from the book *Traction*, written by Gino Wickman. Over the past three years, the team has adopted the program with the assistance of EOS implementor, Scott Patchin, as well as feedback from the creator, Gino Wickman.

The Chamber team presented a session called “The EOS Journey” at the July 2018 Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) Conference in Des Moines, sharing the impact that EOS has had on our organization. This interactive session provided concepts and tools of EOS to other Chamber executives, along with an invitation to host their staff teams at our offices to experience EOS and learn more about implementing it themselves. The presentation was made to a packed room, with many Chambers requesting follow-up information, and making plans for exploring our EOS culture in person.

## Why EOS?

It’s interesting to ask business presidents, CEOs and managers the question, “What keeps you up at night?” It cuts to the core of the pinch points and issues that challenge an organization the most. Is it a Purpose issue? Does everyone agree on your company’s values, your passion and your niche? Is it a People issue? Have you identified the roles that are essential to running your business and keeping it on track, and do you have the people with the right skills and capacity sitting in those seats? Is it a Plan issue? Do you know where you want to be 10, three and even one year from now, and do you have concrete, quantifiable steps in place to help you get there?

EOS provides the framework for planning and the tactics for achieving. It isolates the six functions needed in every organization, and teaches a disciplined approach to allocating resources, organizing and managing staff, creating and living by organizational core values, prioritizing goals, and executing and evaluating both short and long term plans and goals.

## How has EOS Changed the Chamber?

“It’s been transformational” is what Jane Clark described at the ACCE EOS presentation in July. “Identifying the key roles needed to make our organization run efficiently, and having the right people in those seats creates a culture of ownership. Everyone knows what they are responsible for and takes accountability to make sure it’s done right. When everyone’s rowing in the same direction, the boat glides smoothly through the water.”

A critical piece of EOS is the development and total adoption of our Core Values. We very intentionally live these values as we interact with members, plan for programs and events, deliver customer service, hire staff members, recruit volunteer Board members and Ambassadors, and create media and marketing plans. Our newly remodeled office allows us to welcome members into a bright and energetic space, and guests often spontaneously remark about the energy and positive attitude they experience with us.

This disciplined approach has led us to create one page plans for everything we do. These plans are data driven and measurable: Event Master Plans (EMPs) and Post Event Reports (PERs) record all registration, attendance, budget, theme, and Net Promoter Score (NPS) information from each event, and serve as a template to evaluate and guide planning for future events. Vision Traction Organizers record all goals, from quarterly, to yearly, to three year and 10 year goals, and provide the road map to achieve them.

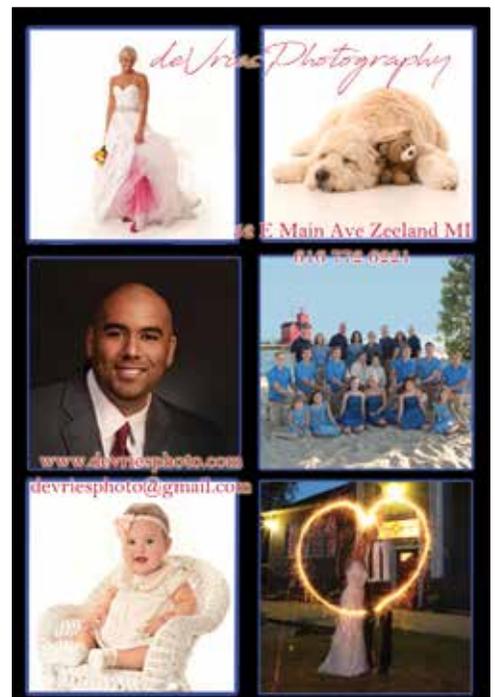
## Johnny Appleseed

It’s our transformational experience, that has Jane Clark sharing our story throughout our business community, as well as throughout the Chamber of Commerce community. She calls herself “Johnny Appleseed,” buying the books by the case and passing them out to interested business leaders. The Chamber has hosted an EOS Users Group for the last two years, bringing EOS-following business leaders together

quarterly to further develop mastery of the core principles. The ACCE presentation sparked interest from many Chambers, and even the ACCE organization itself is exploring implementing EOS. Next, the West Coast Chamber team will take the EOS story to the Michigan Association of Chamber Professionals conference in Flint in October, to help more organizations explore the concepts of EOS that have made our Chamber a focused and forward thinking team, from Board of Directors, to Ambassadors, to the mighty staff of seven.

## The West Coast Chamber’s Core Values are:

- It’s All About You
- Contagious Energy with a Positive Attitude
- Deliver Remarkable Experiences
- Learn, Innovate, Share
- Think Big & Be Great



# Celebrating the Opening of Chamber Pointe

By Caroline Monahan



The West Coast Chamber building is the symbolic eastern gateway to downtown Holland. As with many renovations, the transformation of the Chamber offices that brought the building into the 21st century raised the profile of the property adjacent to the building. It's like the domino effect of home improvement, when your kitchen remodel leads to new landscaping and a pool. One thing naturally leads to another. Which brings me to the point, the grand opening of Chamber Pointe.

Jane Clark, Chamber President explained, "As we completed our renovation of the Chamber building and the surrounding property, we recognized that there was an opportunity to freshen up the property immediately to our east." With the wise guidance of longtime Holland landscape designer, Bill Johnson, this pocket park has been carefully designed with aesthetics

and functionality in mind. His design of a "welcoming arc that hugs the Chamber building," includes a walkway flanked by a stacked stone seating area, and fresh plantings, and shade trees. It will serve as a lush welcoming green to visitors entering downtown, a resting place for walkers, and also as an outdoor meeting and learning space for Chamber events. Chamber yoga, anyone?

Located on the corner of 8th Street and Garretson Avenue, in the triangular parcel of land is situated between the West Coast Chamber building and the DeVos Field House, the development of Chamber Pointe was funded by the Chamber Foundation and will be maintained by the City of Holland. "We worked closely with the staff, community and the city on this project," said Jane. "Andy Kenyon, Director of Holland Parks and Recreation, has been

instrumental in helping us all determine how to enhance this entrance point into our community, and we believe it will be a win-win for the community and the Chamber."

No grand opening is complete without a Chamber Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, and Chamber Pointe's was held on Monday, September 17, with Chamber Board Members, Ambassadors, members and staff present. Member firms associated with the project include Lakewood Construction, who managed the remodel of the Chamber office building, and Integrity Landscaping. As the grass and plantings grow into the space, so will Chamber programs. Keep your eyes and ears open for innovative Chamber gatherings and events coming in this refreshed outdoor learning space!




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# Chamber Announces Changes to Leadership Team

**A**n annual check-up should be part of everyone's maintenance and development plan, and the close of the Chamber's fiscal and program year in August provides a great opportunity to assess everything from events to committees to leadership. Look for these changes:



**Jodi Owczarski**

Jodi Owczarski has been named the Vice President of the West Coast Chamber. Jodi had been in the role of Director of Sales and Member Engagement since she joined the Chamber in 2017. In reality, we called her the Chamber Czar, as Jodi's responsibilities were much broader, including providing leadership in every department within the organization, as well as serving as the Integrator (within the EOS framework). As Vice President, Jodi oversees the Events, Human Resources, Accounting and Finance functions, manages the Facilities and Operations, and directs the West Coast Leadership Program. Jodi's limitless capacity for solving math problems are essential to creating budgets and balance sheets, and her inviting personality and quick humor, combined with her strategic thinking, give her the edge when managing staff, committees and volunteers. Jodi's contagious energy ripples out into our business community.



**Britt Delo**

Britt Delo, who joined the Chamber in December of 2017 as Relationship Manager, will now assume the role of Director of Membership. Britt's laser focus on prioritizing the needs of each member is the epitome of the Chamber core value, "It's All About You." Her ability to build relationships with new and existing members grows out of her strong listening and problem solving skills. Britt works closely with the Ambassadors and their Leadership Team, helping to redefine the structure of the committee and setting up strategic goals to help the Chamber stay more closely connected to individual members. As the point person for sponsorships, Britt identifies our members key strategic goals, and helps them assess which programs or events most closely align with their needs. With her contagious laughter and smile, Britt is always eager to put our members first.



**Caroline Monahan**

Caroline Monahan joined the Chamber in 2015 and has been promoted to the position of Director of Marketing and Communications. As the chief storyteller for the Chamber, Caroline is responsible for sharing the news of our members, our business community, and our Chamber committees, programs and events in interesting and creative ways to spark ideas and help our members make connections. Caroline strategically integrates all website, social media, magazine, broadcast and email communications, and develops all Chamber branding through articles, images, and videos. In this fast paced world of digital communication, Caroline is endlessly "learning, innovating and sharing," looking to implement the most innovative and effective tools to keep our members informed and engaged.

# October Calendar of Events

Wednesday, October 3

## **Trifecta of Trade Tariffs and More International Trade Developments Concerning Companies Today**

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce, 272 E 8th Street, Holland, MI

The West Coast Chamber and Lakeshore Advantage invite you to join us for a lunch and learn event as we welcome speaker Christine Sohar Henter, Of Counsel with Barnes & Thornburg LLP, Washington, D.C. Office.

Time: 12-1pm

Cost: Free

Sponsor: Worksighted

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

## **West Coast Leadership Alumni: Nonprofit Board Certification**

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland, MI

The Nonprofit Board Certification Program offers guidance for those serving or planning to serve on nonprofit boards. Designed as an engaging experience with opportunities for learning, discussion and practice, participants, regardless of experience, become more knowledgeable and strategic organizational leaders.

Time: 4:30 – 8:30pm

Cost: \$5 to attend, please register online.

Sponsor: Partnered Event with Lakeshore Nonprofit Alliance



Tuesday, October 9, 2018

## **Wake Up West Coast: Gentex President Steve Downing**

@Haworth Inn and Conference Center, 225 College Avenue, Holland, MI

Wake Up West Coast brings together over 200 members every month for networking, to hear about business best practices, community initiatives, and to learn from fascinating leaders from around the country and within our own community. Each month features coffee and networking time followed by a delicious buffet and feature presentation.

Time: 7:30 - 8:30am

Cost: \$25 per Chamber member  
\$40 per non-member

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

## **Lakeshore Latinas Meeting**

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce - Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland, MI

The Lakeshore Latinas mission is fostering advocacy, service, authentic relationships and opportunities for personal and professional development. We hope that you can join us! Beverages and light hors d'oeuvres will be provided. Our goal for this group is to get to know each other and build trust.

We're asking you to bring an Artifact with you to the event and share it with us. Each attendee will have 1-2 minutes to share their Artifact.

Time: 5:30 - 7:30pm

Cost: \$10 per person

Sponsor: Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Care Network of Michigan

Friday, October 12, 2018

## **Advocacy in Action: Public Policy Committee Meeting**

@West Coast Chamber, 272 E. 8th St., Holland, MI

The West Coast Chamber serves as the region's advocate for business at the local, state and federal levels, representing the combined strength of our diverse industry sectors. 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: There is no cost to attend.

Monday, October 15, 2018

## **Advocacy in Action: Governmental Affairs Breakfast**

@Alpenrose Restaurant, 4 E 8th St, Holland, MI

Join us for breakfast with our elected state and federal legislators. At this Governmental Affairs Breakfast we will be providing a candidate forum for the upcoming election in November. Ample time is provided for questions and answers. Arrive at 7:15am for a brief networking session before the breakfast begins

Time: 7:30 - 8:45am

Cost: \$25 per Chamber member, \$40 per non-member

Sponsor: Huntington Bank

Thursday, October 25, 2018

## **Power Breakfast**

@Boatwerks Event Center, 216 Van Raalte Ave, Holland, MI

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\* Breakfast & Structured Networking

\* Door Prizes

Time: 7:45 - 9:30am

Cost: \$25 members, \$40 non-members

\$75 Display Table - includes your event registration (Chamber members only)

Thursday, October 25, 2018

## **424 Affinity Group Meeting**

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce - Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland, MI

### **Social Media 101**

You asked and we delivered!

Please join us as we welcome Tabitha Lohr with Lohr Marketing who will touch on the different social media platforms and the demographics for each of these platforms. She will discuss time management for posting and how to read the data gathered from the posts. Tabitha will also touch on Google and how it works along with social media to bring more targeted traffic to your website.

Time: 3:30 – 5pm

Cost: \$10 per member, \$20 per non-member



Friday, October 26, 2018

## **Maximize Your Membership**

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce - Learning Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland, MI

Join us for our Maximize Your Membership Orientation lunch to learn about the benefits of membership. Delivering remarkable experiences is a core value of the West Coast Chamber, and our upbeat and interactive orientation is designed to help new, prospective, and existing members learn how to utilize their memberships for maximum effectiveness. We make it a fun day at the Chamber when we welcome you into our home to get acquainted!

Time: 11:30am – 1pm

Cost: There is no cost to attend this event, but registration is greatly appreciated. Complimentary lunch will be provided.

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# Entrepreneurial Spirit Alive in West Michigan and at Gentex



SURGE Celebration October 25 to Celebrate the West Michigan Lakeshore Startup Community.



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» 581 U.S.	» 36 U.S.	» 269 U.S. patents
» 722 foreign	» 290 foreign	» 304 foreign patents
		» 77 trademarks

*"To stay like a startup and retain a culture of innovation, you have to have something that differentiates you. At Gentex, this is our people, investment in Research and Development and our intellectual property."*

*– Neil Boehm, CTO, Gentex*

Gentex, a startup in 1974 and now Ottawa County's largest employer, fosters a culture of innovation at their company they feel differentiates them and helps them stay like a startup through the creation of new ideas and technologies.

Gentex is sponsoring the SURGE Celebration, hosted by Lakeshore Advantage, on October 25 from 5-7:30pm to celebrate the West Michigan Lakeshore startup community and growth-minded business leaders and investors who support it.

We interviewed Neil Boehm, an electrical engineer by education who this year was promoted to Chief Technology Officer, about this new role at their organization and how to stay relevant in your industry.

**Q: How would a company know it's time to have a Chief Technology Officer?**

**A:** A Chief Technology Officer is responsible to ensure the company's near and long-term technology strategies are achieved. For Gentex, it was a transition point in the size and complexity of the business. We reached a stage where the organization needed a more consolidated approach to the research and development aspects of the business and to find multiple paths of success to continue our growth.

**Q: What advice do you have for startups?**

**A:** Stay focused on your core competencies and strategic direction. Don't focus too broadly - this will dilute your resources and you'll struggle to be compelling to your customers. Also, as a

startup you need to focus on ways to get your product to market that provide a business case not only for your product but also for your customers and consumers.

**Q: Why is it important for Gentex to be involved in the SURGE Celebration?**

**A:** Gentex is a technology-focused company and we're excited to help support the growing number of entrepreneurs in the West Michigan area. We've been successful as a company in part due to our entrepreneurial spirit that we promote internally. We want startup companies to have the same opportunity we've had to develop a successful business and be able to give back to the community.

**Q: Any closing thoughts for us about your experience?**

**A:** Throughout my career, I've lived overseas and had multiple experiences in technology and engineering. The diverse exposure and culture at Gentex and how we are focused on innovation creates an entrepreneurial mentality for success and opportunity, both for individuals with ideas and for the company.

*Go to [www.gentextech.com](http://www.gentextech.com) to see the cool things we are doing with technology.*



# Carpe Latte

By Winsome Maddock



*Two Carpe Latte employees ready to offer excellent service.*

Carpe Latte is not your average coffee shop, this unique café is located just outside of Crown Motors Toyota Dealership and serves delicious coffee, smoothies, and bagels to car shoppers and dedicated customers alike. Carpe Latte has been a member of the Chamber and accepting West Coast Cash for four years. You can either stop in and order your coffee at the counter or zip through the drive through. Either way, you must visit this café.

This cute location was a dream of Crown Motor's owner, and is supported by very happy reviews from customers that have visited and tasted the items on the menu. Carpe Latte boasts "custom built" espresso drinks, freshly brewed coffee and tea, fresh baked goods, and to go the extra mile, they serve homemade whipped cream on their drinks. They offer a family friendly atmosphere and consider

themselves a great location to bring the kids to enjoy a smoothie or hot cocoa. College students have said what a wonderful studying atmosphere they find at this coffee shop; they open early and close late providing many hours for studying or catching up with friends.

Carpe Latte offers highspeed internet, and has a laptop open to public use in case you find yourself without. The staff at Carpe Latte are known for going above and beyond when it comes to customer service. Whether they are serving a client from the car dealership or a local walk-in customer, they will provide excellent service with a joyful attitude.

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# Happenings at the Chamber



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Lakeshore Latinas meet to discuss Civic Engagement.



Heritage Rehab & Nursing celebrate a ribbon cutting at their renovated space in Zeeland.



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