

# CONNECT

Energize, Innovate, Engage with the West Coast Chamber

January 2018

Feature:

## Economic Development Foundation



Cover photo by McConomy Photography

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featured in Connect



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Feature: EDF .....	4
Expert Contributor: Mercy Health .....	6
Expert Contributor: Navigate .....	8
DSA International Delivers on Innovation, Precision and Customer Satisfaction .....	10
Members Making a Difference: A Steakhouse, and So Much More .....	12
Jim Hutt of Hutt Inc is the West Coast Chamber's 2017 Small Business Person of the Year.....	13
Calendar of Events.....	15
Fifth Third Bank Sponsors New West Coast Leadership Minority Scholarships .....	16
New Members .....	18
New Team Members.....	19
Business Profile .....	20
Happenings at the Chamber .....	22



## ADVERTISING INDEX

Andy Spears Farm Bureau Insurance .....	17
Baumann & DeGroot Heating & Cooling .....	24
Boer's Transfer and Storage.....	9
Bosch's Landscape .....	9
Buis Mattress & Bedroom Furnishings .....	19
Captivation Capital.....	16
City Flats Hotel .....	14
deVries Photography.....	18
Edify North .....	21
First National Bank.....	6
Floor Gear Unlimited .....	22
Gordon Water Systems.....	21
Guaranteed Rate .....	14
Holland Hospital .....	9
Holland Litho Printing Services .....	21
Hope College.....	9
Hospice of Holland .....	12
Lakewood Construction .....	13
Lighthouse Insurance Group .....	9
Manpower .....	9
Mercy Health Partners .....	7
National LED Solutions .....	14
Navigate.....	8
Saugatuck Center For the Arts .....	18
Shoreline Technology Solutions.....	14
Special Olympics .....	23
Suburban Inns.....	17
Wendy Ryder Sotheby's Intl. Realty .....	13
Yacht Basin Marina .....	18
Zeeland Lumber .....	17

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# Letter from Jane Clark

President, Michigan West Coast  
Chamber of Commerce



The start of a new year is a good time to reflect on your business' progress over the past year and plan how you want your business to develop in 2018. A resolution is a decision to do something differently to bring about positive change, and as you get a fresh start on a new year, your resolutions can be powerful catalysts for business growth.

Without a doubt, resolving to maximize your Chamber membership should be high on your list. There's nothing like talking to other business people for sparking new ideas, refining old ones, and making contacts. We make it our business to help our members connect to each other and to the resources that will help them succeed, and we've got the tools to make that happen for your business.

This magazine gives you a taste of some of the different ways our business community comes together through the Chamber, but there is much more than what you see on these pages. Get online and look at our website, or call our office and schedule a consultation. It's our resolution to make sure you are getting the most out of your membership, and we invite you to make your membership a goal for 2018 as well.

Best Regards,  
Jane Clark

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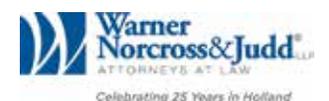
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Feature:

# Economic Development Foundation

By Chelsea Scott



Gary Witkowski and Julie Parker, Economic Development Foundation.  
Photo provided by McConomy Photography.

## History

In 1980, the Grand Rapids Local Development Corporation was founded, and authorization was received from the Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide financing to established, growth orientated companies within the city of Grand Rapids. Championed by Charles Krupp of the Grand Rapids Economic Development Office, the corporation was led by a board of directors. The board represented bankers, local government, businesses and economic developers.

“The main SBA financing programs in 1980 were the 502 and 503 loan programs,” said Economic Development Foundation (EDF) board member Dan Oegema. “Those two programs eventually became the 504 Loan Program. As the SBA changed its regulations and as opportunities presented, the organization expanded its service area to include Kent County and then to include 15 counties and, eventually, to include the entire state of Michigan.” Due to the expansion of the service area, the organization changed its name to the Economic Development Foundation-Certified and became independent from the city of Grand Rapids.

## Who is EDF?

EDF is a Certified Development Company (CDC), authorized by the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) to originate, close and service commercial loans for the SBA’s 504 Loan Program. EDF has been instrumental in assisting small businesses with the acquisition of real estate and equipment. Since EDF’s inception, they have approved over 400 loans and created over 8,000 jobs totaling \$470,000,000 in 504 loan proceeds. EDF is one of only three CDCs in the state of Michigan and one of over 200 around the country.

## Julie Parker

EDF’s mission is personal for President Julie Parker, whose grandfather Del Crowe was one of the founding members of EDF. “He also served as President of the organization and chairman of the board for many years,” she said. Julie began her CDC career at EDF in 1999 and it was also her first choice when she re-entered the job market when her kids were in elementary school. “After working at EDF for a few years full-time, I decided I wanted something part-time,” she said. “At that time, EDF was packaging loans for the West Coast Chamber and Lakeshore 504, so I was made aware of a part-time position in their office. After talking it over with my grandfather, I decided the move would be a good fit.” After working at the Chamber for a year, Julie then took the role of Executive Director where she served for over 13 years. In 2015, an opportunity presented itself to rejoin the EDF team, where she now serves as President.

## EDF/Lakeshore 504 Merger

Lakeshore 504 was managed through a partnership with the West Coast Chamber and the Grand Haven Chamber of Commerce and served the West Michigan Lakeshore market. Early last year, the two chambers proposed the merger to Lakeshore 504's board of directors. The board voted in June to file with the SBA for approval of the merger and it became official in October 2017. The merger did not include the transition of any staff; however, three board members that previously served on the Lakeshore 504 Board have now joined EDF's board. Those members are Matt Hoeksema, Macatawa Bank, Cerise Semrinec, Community Shores Bank and Steve Wilson, NorthStar Commercial.

Moving forward all loans previously managed by Lakeshore 504 will now be managed by EDF. "This merger allows West Michigan businesses and lenders the opportunity to work with an expanded team of experts throughout the entire loan process," said Julie. "Lakeshore 504 felt that partnering with EDF would give small business owners and lenders both confidence and familiarity and we are honored to have been chosen to take over the portfolio." Moving forward, EDF will continue to partner with the two chambers to promote and proactively market the SBA 504 Loan Program to their collective members. Jane Clark, President of the West Coast Chamber added, "For nearly 35 years, we have partnered with Lakeshore 504 to offer long-term fixed-asset financing to our small business members for their real estate acquisitions, construction, and equipment purchases through the SBA. The merger of Lakeshore 504 and EDF allows us to continue our support of growing businesses in our community."

### Gary Witkowski

Loan Officer Gary Witkowski, who has over 11 years of experience in commercial finance including nine years at EDF, is eager to work alongside Julie to serve the lakeshore. "The merger between EDF and Lakeshore 504 presents an opportunity for us to expand and grow in the lakeshore market," he said. "We look forward to working collaboratively with the West Coast Chamber and partnering with local lenders to help the small businesses of the region grow." That growth is what Gary finds rewarding about the work EDF does. "A key factor to economic growth for our region is the success of these small businesses," he said. "Our loans go to start-up companies as well

as to existing companies that are poised for growth and expansion. It's rewarding for EDF, and personally rewarding for me, to play a part in seeing these companies succeed and grow." Along with years of experience and extensive knowledge of the 504 Loan Program, Gary brings to his position a BS in accounting and finance from Grand Valley State University and a master's from Northwood University's Richard DeVos Graduate School of Management. While in college, Gary completed an internship with EDF, which was the perfect way to transition into a permanent position. "I feel very fortunate to be a part of the EDF team," he said. "The business-friendly atmosphere within this region is one of the many reasons why I decided to live and work here."

### Client Testimonials

*"Thank you for the friendly, professional, and expeditious experience I had with your organization implementing my loan on the 504 program. I was impressed by the detailed knowledge and fluid communication the whole team had with my bank, real estate agent and attorney. Everyone seemed connected with each other, and I was just being copied with minimal tasks throughout the process. Felt like the "A" team was on my side, and this greatly reduced the stress/workload I was anticipating from talking to others who have previously taken part in the 504 program." – Fred Egge, Owner, Aromech, Inc., Holland, MI*

*"Working with the EDF, SBA, and our local Huntington Bank was a great solution for our re-financing. The ability to lock-in a competitive long-term rate was a huge factor and, over the years, this decision will help to reduce our costs and free up valuable time that can now be spent elsewhere," – Wade Eldean, Eldean Shipyard Owner, Holland, MI*

*"We appreciated all of the help and support we received from EDF to obtain our SBA 504 loan, which in return let us focus on growing our Tool and Die business." – Dennis Myers, Owner, Tool N Die, Wayland, MI*

The team at EDF continues to support local industry by securing 504 loans for small businesses. Future goals include expanding to the east side of the state.

*For more information on the Economic Development Foundation, visit [www.growmichigan.com](http://www.growmichigan.com). Gary Witkowski can be reached at 616-323-1275 or [gary@growmichigan.com](mailto:gary@growmichigan.com).*

### EDF Staff

#### Julie Parker

President  
19 Years of SBA/  
Credit Experience

#### Bradd Pierce

Senior Loan Officer  
30 Years of SBA/  
Credit Experience

#### Gary Witkowski

Loan Officer  
11 Years of SBA/  
Credit Experience

#### Matt Mankivsky

Junior Loan Officer  
3 Years of SBA/Credit  
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#### Amy Dubridge

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#### Abbey Byrne

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13 Years of SBA/  
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#### Laura Seromik

Closing Specialist  
19 Years of SBA/  
Credit Experience

#### Kyle Wilson

Servicing Manager  
20 Years of SBA/  
Credit Experience

#### Nik Hoezee

Intern  
Senior at Grand Valley  
State University



# Would You Know if You're Having a Heart Attack? Know the Signs

Content provided by Mercy Health

**M**ercy Health wants to remind readers not to ignore symptoms of cardiovascular disease, the leading killer in the United States. Minutes matter when it comes to heart attacks and strokes. The American Heart Association (AHA) reports that every 42 seconds in the U.S., someone dies from heart disease, cardiovascular disease or stroke. 790,000 people in the U.S. die each year from heart attacks.

## Know the signs of a heart attack:

- Chest pressure, tightness, pain (angina) or heaviness
- Extreme fatigue
- Fainting and/or lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Pain in shoulders, neck, jaw or arms
- Shortness of breath, with or without chest pain
- Cold sweats

Risk factors vary, but they include **age, diet, family history, genetics** and yes, **gender**. In fact, heart disease is the number one killer of women; approximately one woman dies every minute!



Dr. El-amir

So if you think you're having a heart attack, call 911 immediately. 77-year-old Hudsonville resident Richard Buck, who recently survived a heart attack, urges you to know the signs. He was sure his chest pain was from indigestion. When his pain persisted, he knew it was time to go to the emergency room at Mercy Health.

Richard's bloodwork indicated he had suffered a heart attack. "I had six blockages and my condition was beyond what they could do with stents. Cardiologist Nishant Kalra, MD, said I was a good candidate for open heart surgery which is performed

in Muskegon," said Richard. Dr. Kalra referred Richard to Nabeel El-amir, MD, an assistant professor of cardiac surgery at University of Michigan Health (U-M Health) and cardiac surgeon at Mercy Health. Two days later, Buck underwent open heart surgery and described El-amir as "an excellent surgeon with a great bedside manner." He attributes his speedy recovery "to the skill of such a fine surgeon."

Following surgery, Buck spent two days in ICU followed by two days in a step-down unit. "The caregiving staff were excellent." One week from the first onset of symptoms, Buck was back home. Now he attends cardiac rehab at Mercy Health in Grand Rapids, where he has also met with his cardiologist and surgeon in clinics for follow-up care.

Buck's prognosis is good. Dr. El-amir says bypass surgery usually improves a patients' long-term survival. "We also encourage patients to make lifestyle changes that include weight reduction, proper diet, diabetes management and smoking cessation."

Buck says he had warning signs he attributed to the "natural aging process" rather than to heart problems. "I wish I had



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discussed these signs in more detail with my primary care physician. I had some swelling in my ankles and fatigue to the point that I would fall asleep every time I sat down.”

Mercy Health’s team-based approach broadens patient access to comprehensive cardiovascular services regionally and locally. “It gives patients more options and more choices,” said Dr. El-amir.

**Learn more about heart health at [www.mercyhealthheartandvascular.com](http://www.mercyhealthheartandvascular.com).**

*All physicians and staff participating in this program provide services in a manner consistent with Mercy Health’s Catholic mission and the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services.*

*Mercy Health serves patients across West Michigan, providing access to cardiovascular services, cardiac surgery and electro-physiology services through the same health care system for continuity of quality care. In collaboration with U-M Health, the Mercy Health cardiac surgery program is led by distinguished cardiac surgeons Dr. Richard Downey and Dr. Nabeel El-amir, who together bring 50 years of surgical experience and perform more than 350 cardiac surgeries annually.*



*“I’m anxious to get back to doing the things I like to do. I have a positive outlook, though I need to come to grips with seriously changing my lifestyle regarding diet and exercise,” said Buck.*

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Drs. Meek and Meengs serve as cardiologists at the Mercy Health Physician Partners West Shore Cardiology practice and are accepting new patients in our Holland North office. Both doctors are board certified and specialize in a variety of cardiovascular disease treatments, including coronary artery disease, heart rhythm disorders and heart failure.

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# Scaling Up

By Rob Stam, Navigate

A few years ago, my wife and I considered building an addition over our garage. I looked at the walls and ceiling beams to determine if it was possible. I thought it was, so I had a builder come over to look further. He concurred that the walls and ceiling beams were fine, but told me that the most important factor was whether or not the concrete footings were capable of supporting the weight. It was an unseen variable, not immediately visible, that would determine whether or not we could expand the house.

One of the most common topics we address on a regular basis in business is how to scale up. There are several seemingly obvious factors related to this such as a marketing strategy, pricing, resources, etc. But those are all irrelevant if the foundational “footings” aren’t in place. And that foundation begins with you.

Your marketing efforts, office or retail space, and business plan are only as valuable as the foundation on which they are built. That foundation has always been, and will always be, people. Here are two quick tips to building that stronger foundation.

*First, in the words of the ancient Greeks, “know thyself.”*

For us to scale consistently we must be true to who we are. It’s impossible to effectively scale up a business from a place of inauthenticity. For many of us, what led us to our current career came at a sacrifice to some of the things that make us who we truly are. At some point we find ourselves re-examining that and trying to realign our career with our self (i.e. the midlife crisis). The sooner we begin the process of true self-examination, the sooner we can scale a career or business. What are you great at? Not great at? How do you want to (or not want to) spend your time? Then, what are doing to make yourself the best version of yourself possible? How are you keeping yourself motivated? Fueling your ambitions? Educating yourself?

*Second, if you want the job done right, don’t do it yourself.*

Wait, what? Yes, you read that correctly. The original version of this old saying may apply in some scenarios, but what it really means is that if you want the job done right—based on how you define right—do it yourself. But you can’t scale up with that limited perspective.

Empowerment is also a key to scaling up. Yes, you risk someone fumbling the ball, but that’s how they learn and in turn how they surpass you. Any great leader will tell you that a key to his or her



success was finding people who could take things further than they could themselves. Empowering others is how we find better ways of doing things and grow far beyond what we could on our own.

Know who you are and what you’re passionate about. Create a business or a department that allows, even demands, that people take the reins, make mistakes, and discover what hidden ideas and talents are lurking below the surface. That’s a foundation you can build on.

*Rob is the President of Navigate and author of The Entrepreneur’s Survival Guide. For more information and contact information visit [www.robstam.com](http://www.robstam.com).*





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# DSA International Delivers on Innovation, Precision and Customer Satisfaction

By Caroline Monahan



*DSA International Partners, Mark Bouwman and Brad DeBruyne.*

Headquartered in Zeeland, Michigan, DSA International positions itself as a partner to the global furniture industry. Established in February of 2003 with the vision of helping customers leverage its product solutions to build business brands and distribution, DSA designs, develops, and delivers sustainable product platforms. Since its inception, DSA has evolved into a global company, with additional locations in southeast Asia and Latin America, and nearly 100 employees that deliver products both domestically and internationally.

DSA Partner/Chief Product Officer Brad DeBruyne reflected, “We started the company 15 years ago with only a business plan, vision and passion to help our customers build their brands and distribution. We started very simply, supplying basic products. Now we’ve dramatically grown by expanding our thinking to encompass designing, developing, and delivering world-class products to the furniture industry.”

Being located in what he calls the “Silicon Valley” of the commercial furniture industry puts a tremendous depth and breadth of relevant talent, engineering and materials intelligence and applications know-how right at DSA’s fingertips; connecting with this talent and inspiration has come, in part, through their membership with the Chamber. DSA Partner/COO Mark Bouwman stated, “Over the years DSA team members have participated in educational seminars, networking and leadership opportunities offered by the Chamber. These programs are helping to expose our

team to new trends and opportunities in areas such as leadership development, technology, healthcare and organizational advancements.”

The company has been able to expand its Zeeland facilities with the assistance of SBA 504 loans, having secured a second loan in the spring of 2014. This loan helped to support a building and capital expansion project at their main office, doubling the facility’s footprint to prepare for projected growth, modernizing their facility, and advancing their technology infrastructure.

Said Bouwman, “The 504 Loan has certainly played a key role in helping our company reach its growth projections over the last three years. The 504’s lower interest rate helps DSA to keep overhead expenses lower and, as a result, improve cash flow – important elements for a young growing company maneuvering in this competitive global marketplace.”

With an eye always turned toward innovation, DSA believes there is always an opportunity for the next great product, and helping customers get those new products even more rapidly, and with precision and accuracy is their goal. “From the inception of our company it’s really rewarding when you’ve delivered a product that truly helps propel a company’s financial performance and they genuinely appreciate the success,” Bouwman said.

## Small Business Administration 504 Loans

### What is the 504 Loan Program?

According to the US Small Business Administration, "the SBA 504 Loan program is a powerful economic development loan program that offers small businesses another avenue for business financing, while promoting business growth, and job creation."

### Approved Uses for 504 Loans

- Purchase land
- Purchase existing buildings
- Purchase long-term machinery and equipment
- Purchase improvements (including grading, street improvements, utilities, parking lots, and landscaping)
- Build new facilities or modernize, renovate or convert existing facilities

### 504 Loans cannot be used for:

- Working capital or inventory
- Consolidating, repaying or refinancing debt (unless it is refinancing debt made with buying or renovating equipment or facilities)
- Speculation or investment in rental real estate

### Typical 504 Loan Structure

The Small Business Administration usually provides 40% of the total project costs, a participating lender tends to cover 50% of the total project costs, and the borrower then contributes 10% of the project costs (<https://www.sba.gov>).

### 504 Loan Eligibility

In order to be eligible for a 504 loan, a business must be operated for profit and fall within the size standards set by the SBA. Under the 504 program, a business qualifies if it has a tangible net worth no more than \$15 million, and an average net income of \$5 million or less after federal income taxes for the preceding two years prior to application.

#### SBA Sources:

Murray, K. (2016). *The 504 Loan Program Explained*. [Web log comment]. Retrieved from [www.sba.gov/blogs/504-loan-program-explained](http://www.sba.gov/blogs/504-loan-program-explained).

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# Members Making a Difference: A Steakhouse and So Much More

By Annika Smeenge



A loyal member of the West Coast Chamber family, Crazy Horse Steakhouse and Saloon has been serving delicious food and a comfortable atmosphere to the Holland/Zeeland community for over twenty years. Not only are they a family friendly restaurant, they are also a key philanthropic business in Holland.

Owner Mark Herman makes it a priority to help support the community by hosting fundraisers at the restaurant a handful of times per year. They also allow customers to pin dollar bills on the walls and throughout the restaurant to add to their fundraising effort. To date, Crazy Horse has raised over \$100,000 to donate to a variety of causes. Over the last 15 years, donations have been made to 9/11 relief, breast cancer research, Benjamin's Hope, Outdoor Discovery Center, and countless other worthy causes.

Service and support aren't the only qualities that Crazy Horse reflects. The family that is built among the staff is a key aspect to their success. Many of the staff members have been a part of the family for 10 or more years. Crazy Horse also utilizes their membership with the West Coast Chamber and participates in the West Coast Cash (WCC) program to help boast their business strategy. By accepting WCC and encouraging local investment, Crazy Horse is always supplementing the community in which they reside.

"We are glad to utilize the WCC program as an opportunity to collaborate with other members of the West Coast Chamber and bring other people within the community to the restaurant," said Heather Laninga, a manager at Crazy Horse.

Crazy Horse Steakhouse and Saloon is ready to serve you with a friendly face and a warm environment. Show your support by making a reservation and visiting them today!

For more information, visit [www.crazyhorsesteakhouse.com](http://www.crazyhorsesteakhouse.com).



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# Jim Hutt of Hutt Inc is the West Coast Chamber's 2017 Small Business Person of the Year



By Caroline Monahan

The 2017 West Coast Chamber Small Business Person of the Year, Jim Hutt of Hutt Trucking, has been a repeat customer to the SBA 504 Loan Program. Hutt was incorporated in March of 1985 by Jim and Ellen Hutt along with Jim's parents, Bernard and Jean Hutt. Between Jim and Bernie they had two employees, two trucks, two trailers and two customer accounts. Bernard Hutt passed in 2011 and today Hutt is wholly owned by Jim and Ellen.



Over the past 30 years, Hutt has evolved into three separate but complementary business units with over 160 total employees. With headquarters in Holland, Michigan, Hutt Companies remains privately owned and operated by the Hutt family.

Hutt's competitive advantage lies in being not only warehouse of dry, frozen, and deep frozen product (ice cream at (-20) degrees Fahrenheit), but in also having a complementary, substantial fleet of trucking assets to support their warehousing capabilities. Having their own freezer and dry warehouses, and the ability to coordinate the freight into and out of those facilities makes Hutt unique. An example of this coordination is that all Hutt tractors and trailers are satellite tracked. This innovative use of GPS technology enables Hutt to remotely set temperatures, start or stop each unit, monitor fuel levels, door opening status, and get any

alarm notifications sent directly to authorized-user smart phones. Real-time temperature information allows Hutt to avoid any unexpected temperature variance while a load is in process of delivery, and ensure the quality of the product.

Hutt has partnered with the SBA on three different 504 projects. The first SBA project was in December of 2010. As part of this project, Hutt was able to acquire the Holland, MI dry warehouse facility that

would also become its corporate headquarters. The second SBA project was completed in early 2016. As part of this project, Hutt was able to acquire the Hudsonville facility as a long-term base of operations for its deep-frozen, cold storage warehouse operations. The third SBA project, the HTC Logistics Hudsonville freezer expansion that added 81,000 square feet of freezer space, was completed in October of 2017.

Entering the frozen food storage market was a major turning point for Hutt. The expansion required them to purchase facilities and customize them to the exact specifications, which were supported by their SBA 405 projects. Hutt has grown both economically and experientially from that first freezer, a clear success within its history.



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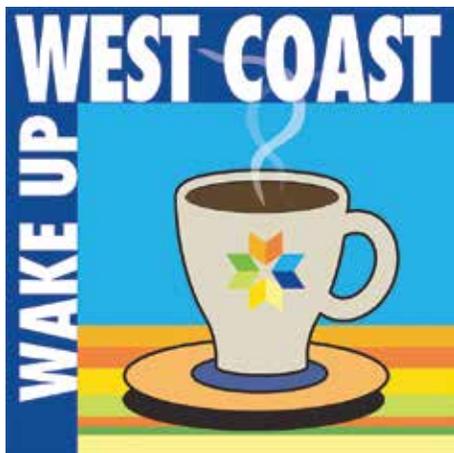
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# January Calendar of Events



Tuesday, January 9, 2018

## Wake Up West Coast

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

Please join us at our monthly Wake Up West Coast event, where you will have the opportunity to hear from a great guest speaker and network with other Chamber members while enjoying a delicious breakfast! As always, come early for pre-coffee networking, and stay after breakfast to continue networking and meet the presenter!

Time: 7:30-8:30am

Cost: \$20 per Chamber member (\$25 if registered after January 7) / \$35 per non-member

Thursday, January 11, 2018

## Zeeland Affinity Group

@Howard Miller Community Center, 14 S  
Church Street, Zeeland MI, 49464

The City of Zeeland will be presenting the Zeeland City Vision Plan. Back in 2008-2009, an overall plan was created which they are still working through. Abby DeRoo and her team will be presenting the overall vision of what's in the works for the downtown area, goals and expected time frames for strengthening Downtown Zeeland.

Time: 7-8am

Cost: Free, but registration is appreciated

Friday, January 12, 2018

## Public Policy Committee Meeting

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning  
Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland MI, 49423

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. If interested in more information,

please email Jane Clark.

Time: 8-9:30am

Cost: Free

Monday, January 15, 2018

## Governmental Affairs Breakfast

@Alpenrose Restaurant, 4 E 8th Street,  
Holland MI, 49423

Join us for breakfast with our elected state and federal legislators. Ample time is provided for questions and answers. Arrive at 7:15 am for a brief networking session before the breakfast begins.

Time: 7:30-8:30am

Cost: \$20 per Chamber member / \$25 if registered after January 12 / \$35 per non-member

Wednesday, January 24, 2018

## Leading Edge: Emotional Intelligence

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning  
Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland MI, 49423

Emotional awareness and management practiced together leads to emotional intelligence or "EI". EI is the ability to build and manage relationships that are healthy and productive. As the field of EI research and awareness grows, more and more employers are seeking, promoting, and prioritizing those who exhibit a high level of emotional competency. Come learn insights from psychologists and researchers in the field, and discuss how this information applies to leadership success and promoting on-the-job success.

Time: 8:30am-11am

Cost: \$55 per member / \$35 for each additional attendee from the same company / \$75 per non-member

Thursday, January 25, 2018

## Power Breakfast

@Boatwerks Event Center, 216 Van Raalte  
Ave, Holland MI, 49423

Take the work out of networking! At this popular and fun event, each participant will make at least 21 contacts just during the structured networking. Each attendee should bring at least 80 business cards and may bring copies of one marketing piece to put on the Power Breakfast brochure table.

Time: 7:45-9:30am

Cost: \$20 members (\$25 if registered after October 24) / \$35 non-members / \$50 Display Table - includes your event registration (Chamber members only)

Thursday, January 25, 2018

## Leadership at the Movies - Moneyball

@City Flats Hotel, 61 E 7th Street, Holland MI,  
49423

Looking for a new way to be inspired? Attend our latest after hours event, Leadership at the Movies! This is a conversation based on movie clips from *Moneyball*, professionally facilitated by Jason Pasatta. He will provide insight on leadership and business as it relates to the movie. Be sure to watch the movie before the event to become familiar. Join us for this powerful new event that will be limited to only 25 participants!

Time: 4pm-5:30pm

Cost: \$20 per member / \$30 per non-member

Friday, January 26, 2018

## Maximize Your Membership

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning  
Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland MI, 49423

Interested in learning how a membership with the West Coast Chamber can help you reach your business goals? 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: Free, but registration is appreciated. Lunch will be provided.

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

## Leading Edge: Network and Lunch

@West Coast Chamber of Commerce Learning  
Lab, 272 E 8th Street, Holland MI, 49423

It's a special Network @ Lunch event this month, as we combine a workshop of tips and tricks for successful networking with a lunch at the Chamber offices. Spend your morning sharpening your skills and then put them into action over lunch! Bring your business cards, your best handshake and willingness to meet new people.

Time: 10:30am-1pm

Cost: \$55 per member / \$35 for each additional attendee from the same company / \$75 per non-member  
Cancellations not received 48 hours prior to event will be charged.

For a full listing of events, visit [www.westcoastchamber.org/events](http://www.westcoastchamber.org/events).



# Fifth Third Bank Sponsors New West Coast Leadership Minority Scholarships

By Caroline Monahan

The West Coast Leadership program has been helping to develop community stewards since 1988. The nine month program gives class participants in-depth opportunities to study community and business issues ranging from economic development, to government, to health and human services, to name a few. To date, over 750 people have participated in West Coast Leadership, and the current class consists of 40 individuals.

New this year are two minority scholarships for the West Coast Leadership program, underwritten by Fifth Third Bank. Community Bank President Scott Lubbers is a graduate of West Coast Leadership and expressed his excitement over this new scholarship program. “Our team at Fifth Third is grateful to have such a strong Chamber and leadership program in this community. The minority scholarships Fifth Third provided for this year’s West Coast Leadership class align nicely with our belief that we play a key role in creating holistically stronger communities. It has been so encouraging to hear the momentum around these scholarships and an excitement within the community among those who would like to participate in the future.”

One of the recipients of this year’s scholarship is Reyna Masko, a Friend of the Court Investigator for Ottawa County. Said Reyna, “I feel honored and thankful to have received the Fifth Third Minority Scholarship for the West Coast Leadership Program. Ottawa County’s minority populations are rapidly growing and the need to develop minority leaders is essential. The West Coast Leadership Program allows people to learn leadership skills and empowers them to participate and get involved in the community to make a positive impact. Through their sponsorship, Fifth Third Bank ensures that we are not only developing future minority leaders, but also allows others in the program to get to know people of diverse backgrounds, have a deeper understanding of what diversity really means, and most importantly learn to view their workplace and community through a different lens.”



Reyna Masko



Scott Lubbers

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## Sandy Point Beach House

**Lee Bigby**

616-796-8210

info@spbhmi.com

www.sandypointbeachhouse.com

Sandy Point Beach House is the brainchild of co-owners Peter Krupp and chef Cory Hollemon. They have resurrected a spot that had been closed for five years, opening Sandy Point's doors in January of this year after an extensive renovation of the interiors,

kitchen and outdoor area. Sandy Point Beach House is a casual fine dining restaurant featuring New American cuisine: bringing new culinary trends, fresh seafood, and steaks of the best quality to your plate.

## Warehouse 6 Events

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# The Chamber Welcomes New Members to the Team



**Britt Delo**  
Relationship Manager

Britt is a native and lifetime resident of Holland. She went to West Ottawa High School and then graduated from Hope College with a B.A. in communications and a minor in Spanish. As a swimmer at both West Ottawa and Hope, she spent the first 20 years of her life in the pool, and that is where she met her husband, Josh. They dated from middle school through college and decided to tie the knot before their senior year at Hope. She loves spending time with family and friends, traveling, going to concerts, hiking, practicing yoga, and spending time with her dog, Banjo, and her cat, Bella.

Britt's professional background is in customer service and sales. Over the last several years she's had the opportunity to work in a few different industries including retail management, manufacturing, staffing, and online marketing. Says Britt, "All of these experiences have made me who I am today, and I'm thrilled to be taking the next step in my journey with the West Coast Chamber. I'm so excited to be joining a phenomenal team of passionate, positive, focused, and fun professionals. Having volunteered as an Ambassador with both the West Coast and Grand Rapids Chambers, I knew that when the Relationship Manager position became available, it was an opportunity I could not pass up. I have a passion for this community and for the people and businesses in it. Together we can continue to make this a great place to work, live, and play."



**Zach Gebben**  
Intern

Zach is currently a junior at Hope College where he is studying business and accounting. Zach has always loved numbers and the strategic thinking that can go behind this, but his real passion has always been people. As a result, Zach is pursuing a career in finance. He has had a couple different opportunities thus far, with his latest experience as an intern at Merrill Lynch. In Zach's free time he enjoys all things sports—ranging from golf to basketball to water sports. Zach got connected to the Chamber because of his interest and curiosity for business in the West Michigan community.



**Annika Smeenge**  
Marketing Intern

Annika Smeenge is a senior at Grand Valley State University studying communications, and is also spending this year as the marketing intern for the Chamber. She is passionate about community engagement, specifically in the Holland/Zeeland area. Annika is a Holland native, and wants to remain a helping hand in the same community. She has previously interned as an event planner for Tulip Time Festival Inc. and has worked for a number of years for Crazy Horse Steakhouse and Saloon. Annika is eager to learn, willing to lead, and a wonderful addition to The West Coast Chamber team.

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# Gordon Water Systems



*Gordon Water Systems brothers and business partners, Tom and Steve Duisterhof.*



*Gordon Water Systems team.*

**G**ordon Water Systems (GWS) was started in 1973 by Gordon Duisterhof. Gordon started out selling water softeners, but over the years drinking water systems, rust and odor filters, chlorine reduction systems, bottled water service and office coffee service were added. The company is now in its second generation of ownership with sons Steve and Tom Duisterhof as partners. The brothers now serve as President and Vice-President respectively. GWS is a family-owned company with offices in Grand Rapids, Portage and Kalamazoo that serve over 50 locales in southwest Michigan, including Holland and Zeeland.

Both Steve and Tom pursued other careers after college before joining GWS in the mid 80s and the mid 90s respectively. Although both joined for different reasons, the overarching theme was to help people directly, whether it be customers or employees. “Owning your own business is a strong avenue to do that,” said Tom. It’s also a good way to learn the ropes of management firsthand. “When I joined my brother and father in the business, I had been exposed to the business since I was nine years old, but had never managed people,” Tom said. “Over the years I think what I have learned most is how involved a small business owner is in the lives of the employees. I have learned that patience, support and caring for all our employees is paramount. I saw this example in my dad, but it hits home when you personally help somebody through a really difficult life situation.”

Tom said that he and Steve are both driven by being able to improve people’s quality of life by helping them have clean water. “Whether someone picks up one five-gallon bottle of water a month for their family to drink in their home or we install a

complete whole home system for a large new home, we are helping improve people’s quality of life,” said Tom. GWS’s broad service area and product offering makes each day on the job unique. “Our business takes us into a vast array of size, locations, product/service and cultures,” Tom said. “I love that we work with so many businesses in West Michigan. I also enjoy the wide range of people we help to have better water in their homes.”

The brothers said at the end of the day the service they provide to their customers wouldn’t be possible without the team of people at GWS. “It really comes down to our people,” said Tom. “We have people at GWS that are fun, smart, care about each other and for our customers. Those days I am enjoying work the most are the days I am working with customers and co-workers to solve problems and help people.” And while Tom has all but eliminated coffee from his diet, he does still find time to pause and connect with a team member over one cup a day. “I enjoy making a French press pot of coffee nearly every morning. I enjoy the aroma and the process but mostly providing a cup of hot, rich great coffee (that GWS roasts by the way!) to an employee and then spending a few minutes getting caught up on their life.”

Future goals for GWS include continuing to grow the business, but in a way that is responsible and sustainable. “Not growth just for growth’s sake,” said Tom. “We will do it in a way that is respectful of our employees and our culture.”

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# Happenings at the Chamber



Celebrating the opening of Black Tulip Salon.



The Consumers Credit Union Team.



Panera now has a drive thru!



Ribbon cutting at Greenridge Realty.



Networking before the Wake Up West Coast breakfast.



Britt's first day at the Chamber.



Celebrating the merger of Lakeshore 504 and EDF.



Opening Hope Network's Center for Autism.



Past SBPOY winners Jack Bouwman and Phil Visser.



2017 SBPOY Jim Hutt with past winners Jon Lanning and Jim Vannette.

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