

FOCUS

THE MONTHLY BUSINESS NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE
LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

JUNE 2024

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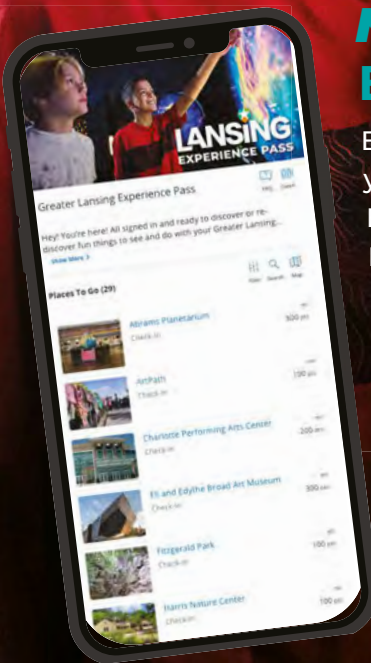
**Local Organizations Encourage More Young
Professionals to Call Greater Lansing 'Home'**

Hilary Doe, Chief Growth and Marketing Officer, Michigan Economic Development Corporation

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LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER
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Leadership and Relationships Key to Attracting Top Talent

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) continues to focus on building relationships and providing resources for our region's employers to develop, attract, and retain top talent.

We've made strides, but there's much work to do. Despite an affordable cost of living, and proximity to excellent higher education institutions, lagging population growth and somewhat flat new business creation have remained challenges for the Lansing region.

This month's *FOCUS Magazine* cover story highlights some of the population trends we're seeing in the Lansing region, as well as initiatives that local organizations are taking to develop a sustainable regional workforce pipeline.

LRCC
hosted
110 events
attracting more
than **7,000**
attendees
in 2023

Relationships matter in a close-knit community like ours. LRCC's recently released "2023 Annual Report" showcases some of our efforts, including a new partnership to provide leadership support and program services for the ATHENA Women's Interest Network. Meanwhile, the 2023-2024 Leadership Lansing cohort marks the largest in program history, with a total of 51 participants.

Strong regional leadership will help move our local economy into the future.

In 2023, the LRCC welcomed 162 new members while maintaining retention levels of 92.39 percent. Some of that retention can be

ascribed to the Chamber's commitment to enhanced knowledge and networking. LRCC hosted 110 events in 2023, providing close to 7,000 attendees with opportunities to connect and build relationships.

On the advocacy front, LRCC collaborated with our regional partners to secure \$240 million in support for our region's economic growth.

We're working collaboratively with organizations such as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and Lansing 5:01 to share our story that the Lansing region is an ideal locale to live, find a career and raise a family.

LRCC will keep working to ensure the Lansing region has the talent, economic opportunities, and leadership to move forward for years to come. ●



TIM DAMAN
PRESIDENT AND CEO
LANSING REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



LRCC will keep working to ensure the Greater Lansing region has the talent, opportunities, and leadership to move forward for years to come."

Thank You Renewing Members

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City of St. Johns
Country Club of Lansing
County Road Association of Michigan
Dean Transportation, Inc.
DeBruin Law PLLC
Delta Township
Eaton Regional Education Service Agency
Fifth Third Bank
Foresight Group, LLC
Grabel & Associates
Great Lakes Crystal Technologies
Greater Lansing Open Soccer
HAP - Health Alliance Plan
Home Builders Association of Greater Lansing
Hooked
Infusion Associates

Jackson National Life Insurance Co.
JEM Cleaning LLC
Kia of Lansing
Klug Law Firm
L.O. Eyecare
Lansing Community College Foundation & Alumni Assoc
Lansing Regional Sister Cities Commission
Lighthouse Limousine
MarxModa
MBH Trucking, LLC
McLaren Health Plan
Meiers Lombardini Lemanski Insurance
Michigan Chamber of Commerce
Michigan Princess Riverboat
Mulder Company
New Leaf Landscaping Company
Niowave Inc.

Nothing Bundt Cakes
The Peanut Shop
The Recovery Project
Red Cedar Lodge
Right at Home of Central Michigan
Riverwalk Theatre (Community Circle Players)
Sam Eyde Management Company, L.L.C.
Simplified Accounting & Tax Service, Inc
Storage Sense - North Aurelius Road
Storage Sense - South Creyts Road
Sweet Encounter Bakery & Cafe
Thrun Law Firm, P.C.
Triton Industries Inc.
Volaris Lansing (Trilogy Real Estate Group, LLC)

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

Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.

Chamber Milestones

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

Maner Costerisan, CPA, PC
85 Years

Mid-Michigan Mechanical Contractors Association
35 Years

Cawood Building Co.
30 Years

ALDI
20 Years

Hospice of Lansing - Ionia Area Hospice
20 Years

Century 21 Looking Glass, Inc.
15 Years

Tri-Star Trust Bank
15 Years

High 5ive The Drew Stanton Foundation
10 Years

Kincaid Building Group, Inc.
10 Years

Abraham & Gaffney, P.C.
5 Years

Colliers Engineering & Design
5 Years

Enbridge (U.S.) Inc.
5 Years

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5 Years

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5 Years



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June 2024

6/6

LANSING ECONOMIC CLUB

Thursday, June 6, from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center,
219 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing

In June, the Lansing Economic Club will welcome Michigan State University President Kevin M. Guskiewicz, a neuroscientist, academic leader and concussion researcher, who began his tenure as MSU's 22nd President on March 4, 2024

Cost: The event is offered at no cost for Lansing Economic Club members, \$55 for Lansing Regional Chamber members, \$75 for future LRCC members. A table of eight is \$425.

6/7

FIRST FRIDAY PUBLIC AFFAIRS CALL UPDATE

Friday, June 7, from 11 to 11:30 a.m.
ZOOM

Join us every First Friday of the month for an insightful briefing on policy and political developments impacting the business community. Hosted by LRCC Public Affairs Senior Vice President, Steve Japinga, these monthly calls are designed to keep our members informed and engaged.

Cost: The event is offered at no cost.

6/11

BUSINESS EDUCATION SERIES: EXPLORING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL OPERATING SYSTEM

Tuesday, June 11, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Lansing Regional Chamber,
500 E. Michigan Avenue, Suite 200, Lansing

The Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) is a practical method for achieving the business success you have always envisioned. More than 100,000 companies have discovered what EOS can do. The June Business Education series will be led by Ryan Jankovic and Mike Maddox, local Professional EOS Implementors and Founders of ESC Business and Freedom Builders.

Cost: The event is offered at no cost for LRCC members and \$25 for future LRCC members.

6/11

MEMBER MIXER

Tuesday, June 11, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Burcham Hills A Life Plan Community, 2700
Burcham Drive, East Lansing

Join us for an evening of connection and community at the Lansing Regional Chamber's Member Mixer hosted at Burcham Hills. This relaxed and welcoming event is the perfect opportunity for members to unwind, meet new contacts, and strengthen existing relationships within the Lansing business community.

Cost: The event is offered at no cost.

6/21

CHAMBER 360

Friday, June 21, 8:30 to 10 a.m.
Lansing Regional Chamber, 500 E. Michigan
Avenue, Suite 200, Lansing

As a current member or a business considering joining the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC), it is critically important that you understand and utilize the tools, resources and relationships available to you through your membership investment. The Chamber 360 program provides an intimate venue for you to connect with other members, provide brief remarks, meet the LRCC team and take a deeper dive into a LRCC membership.

Cost: The event is offered at no cost.

6/26

LRCC CHAMBER TOWNHALL WITH MICHIGAN BUDGET DIRECTOR JEN FLOOD AND MICHIGAN TREASURER RACHAEL EUBANKS

Wednesday, June 26, from 10 to 11 a.m.
Lansing Regional Chamber, 500 E. Michigan
Avenue, Suite 200, Lansing

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Chamber Townhall program series is a unique opportunity for key business leaders and elected officials/candidates to engage on the issues of the day. This roundtable discussion will provide a platform for key chamber members to connect with, discuss, and hear from elected officials/candidates spanning federal to local levels.

Cost: The event is offered at no cost.

LRCC BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES

Delta Township – Eaton County

Wednesday, June 5 | 9 to 10 a.m.

Lansing Community College West Campus
 5708 Cornerstone Drive, Lansing

Lansing – Delhi Township

Wednesday, June 12 | 9 to 10 a.m.

LaFontaine Buick GMC Lansing
 5901 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing

Clinton County

Wednesday, June 26 | 9 to 10 a.m.

Clinton County RESA
 1013 Old U.S. 27A, St. Johns



Pleune Service Company Celebrates Five Decades

Pleune Service Company is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with a series of corporate open houses and plans for an epic holiday party.

“We do good parties anyway, but you’re only going to hit 50 once,” said Pleune chief executive officer Ken Misiewicz. “We’re going to try to make the most of it.”

John Pleune founded Pleune Service Company in 1974. With offices in Lansing and Grand Rapids, the mechanical contractor provides heating and cooling services to commercial and industrial businesses throughout West Michigan.

Notable Pleune clients through the years have included Steelcase Inc., Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital, Forest Health Medical Center, and RiverTown Crossings shopping mall.

Since Pleune operates as a business-to-business entity, versus serving residential customers, its 50th anniversary hasn’t been publicly promoted. Rather, the milestone has been an in-office source of pride.

“We’ve had a lot of fun with it. We’re trying to take that internal energy through the entire year,” said Misiewicz, who has been with Pleune since 1995.

Today, Pleune is 100 percent employee-owned. An Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) was formed in



Misiewicz

1988, acquiring 30 percent of the company’s stock. John Pleune sold his remaining shares to the ESOP in 2002.

Misiewicz said the ownership structure means every one of

Pleune’s 125 employees is an owner and has a personal stake in the company’s success.

“All of the employees stand to gain when we win, and stand to lose when we fail,” he said. “So the engagement level of crafting plans and policies, adapting to customer needs, and adapting to the market is very top-down, inside-out. I call it molecular instead of hierarchal.”

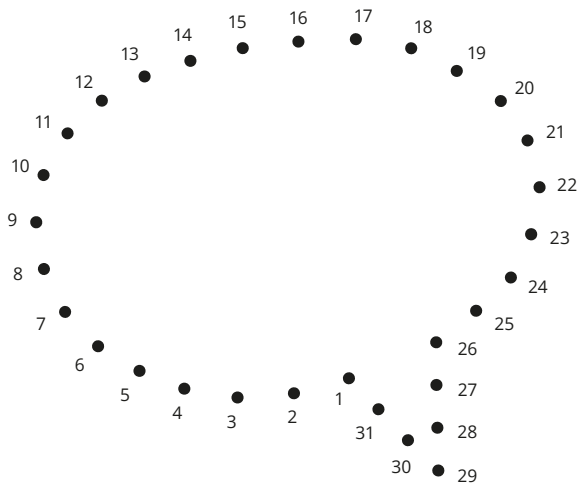
Pleune has endured economic recessions and technological advancements in its 50 years and seen its client majority shift from industrial to commercial and back again.

Misiewicz said Pleune’s executive team is constantly retooling the business plan, assessing the marketplace, and evaluating hiring practices and training to ensure Pleune has many years to come.

“I’m really hoping to leave it better than we found it,” Misiewicz said. “One of the goals with a well-run ESOP is not just to improve the lives of the people that you’re serving at a given time, but it’s meant to be a sustainable model. The whole game is about continuing the game.”

“We’re adding value to the lives of the people in the company. Not just in a financial sense, but it’s the quality of life, the culture, the values, the teamwork, and the quality of customers that we have. Those all matter.” ●

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TWENTY



YEARS

Five Lansing Regional Chamber Members Honored as 'Michigan 50 Companies to Watch' for 2024

The Michigan Celebrates Small Business (MCSB) announced its "Michigan 50 Companies to Watch" recipients for 2024, who were celebrated at the 2024 Michigan Celebrates Small Business Award Gala held on May 21. MCSB brings together the resources of collaborative partners and supporters so that they may raise the profile of small businesses in Michigan, build a network of entrepreneurial companies, and tell the stories of successful, growing Michigan entrepreneurs.

Among this year's recipients are five Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce members including:

- Custom Built Design & Remodeling
- Elderly Instruments
- Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes, PLC
- LorAnn Oils Inc.
- Michigan Creative

The award recognizes high potential, second-stage companies. To be considered for selection as one of the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch, the enterprise must meet certain criteria for the year ending 2023. Criteria includes be a privately held, commercial enterprise that has not received the award in the past (not a nonprofit, not publicly traded, not a subsidiary or division of another company), be past the startup stage, employ 6-99 full-time equivalent W-2 employees, have between \$750,000 and \$50M in annual revenue or working capital from either investments or grants, be headquartered in Michigan and demonstrate the intent and capacity to grow based on, employee or sales growth, sustainable competitive advantage, and other notable successes.

Congratulations to all five of these Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce members on their well-deserved recognition as a "Michigan 50 Companies to Watch" recipient. Their dedication to hard work and success is a testament to the vibrant business community in the Greater Lansing area. ●



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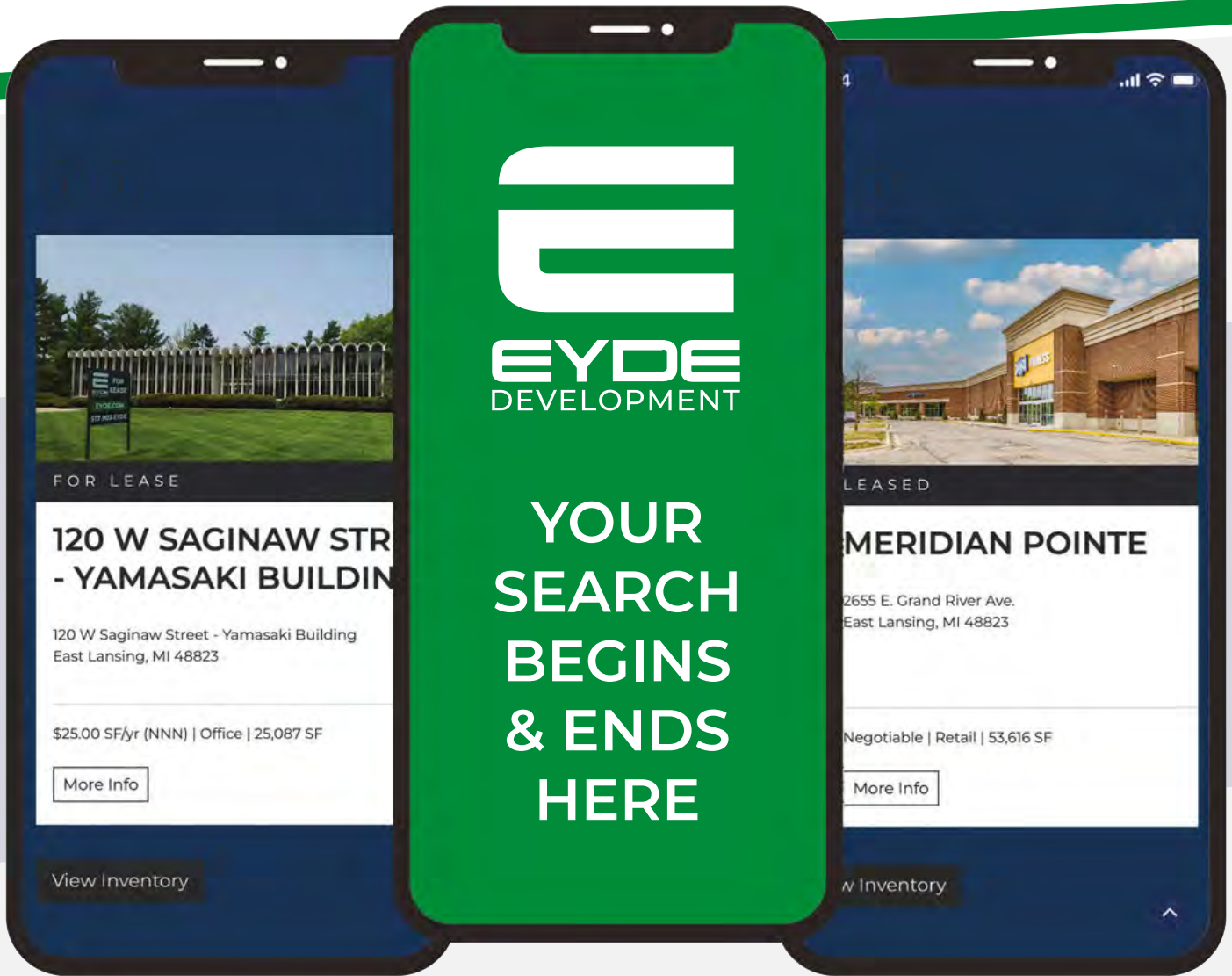
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PEAK 65

By Timothy M. Durso, President, Centennial Group

Did you know that 2024 is PEAK 65, as more Americans will reach traditional retirement age of sixty-five in the same year than any time in history? The U.S. Census Bureau projects 12,000 people will turn sixty-five every day in 2024, that is about 4.4 million. By 2030 all boomers, 70+ million, born from 1946-1964 will be 65 or older.

As you would imagine this milestone will continue to blaze the trail boomers have long been associated with. At each stage whether it be as toddlers, teenagers, or adults our country has had to accommodate their needs, which has resulted in economic and social transformations. This will continue to follow them through their retirement years.

This cohort has been driving the American labor force for the past 50 years. As they all begin to retire it will reshape our workforce and economy. As they age, they will push the worker-to-retiree ratio lower than ever. This will naturally put pressure on programs that support older Americans like Social Security and Medicare that get their funding by taxing current workers. Both programs face shortfalls in the next decade without any increases in taxes or cuts to benefits.

It is not a matter of younger people not wanting to work but they make up a smaller share of the population than boomers have at the same age. Boomers and generations since are having less kids than their parents did. So, there are not enough Gen Xers and Millennials to balance out all the boomers that are retiring. This demographic shift can bring down economic growth.

To help offset this, boomers have been working later in life due to longer life spans, financial incentives, and just the reality they need to make ends meet. As a result, the workforce is older than ever. People under 40 only make up 45% of the workforce compared to over 60% in 1984.

In addition to labor shortages this growing number of retirees will continue to put pressure on healthcare services and the overall cost to provide it. This industry like others the boomers have been a part of will create more jobs in the next decade than any other industry. This is a double edge because care shortages already exist and are likely to get worse as the number of people needing care increases substantially and the number of caregivers remains constant or even shrinks.



In addition to the care people will need the cost continues to rise. As you may know when you reach age 65 and have paid into the system you are eligible for Medicare Part A and B. Part A is premium free provided you have worked for 10 years. Part B has a premium this year of \$174.70 per month per person. This social program that started in 1966, had a first-year budget of \$10 billion. Annual spending for Medicare reached \$944 billion in 2022 which is 21% of National Health Expenditure.

Preparing for our boomers turning sixty-five will require all of us to come together to accommodate one of the greatest generations of all time. ●

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Succession Planning for the Future of Your Business

Preparing for the evolution of a business includes developing a strategy that will move a company forward for generations to come. National data suggests most small businesses don't have a succession plan.

Succession planning is an oft-deferred or overlooked component of business planning, according to J.V. Anderton, a business attorney with Foster Swift Collins & Smith PC.

"Succession planning allows for the continuation of the business in both foreseen (sale/retirement) and unforeseen (unexpected death/disability) circumstances," Anderton said. "The reality is that a business owner should ideally begin succession planning the day the business is started."

Ben Bakken, senior vice president and Lansing market director for Tri-Star Trust, agrees that business owners should know their end game.

"This doesn't mean that a transaction is imminent, any more than an employee saving in their 401k plan means that they are scheduling their retirement party. Succession or exit planning is simply good business planning," said Bakken.

To help Ingham County business owners better plan for the future, a consortium of local entities have teamed up to offer the Succession Planning Technical Assistance Program. With a series of 1.5-hour sessions through September 2024, the program provides practical education to help local business owners create and implement succession plans.

The program is presented by the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, Ingham County, Foster Swift Collins & Smith PC, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, Tri-Star Trust, and Transworld Business Advisors.

"We want to help business owners develop an appreciation for issues involved in succession planning, a framework to approach the issues, and most importantly, the impetus to start the process," said Anderton.

This unique program is presented in two parts: Succession Planning 101 and Succession Planning 201. The first course series covers succession topics such as possible successors, operations and existing contracts, financial planning, self-evaluation and communications, the importance of a succession planning team, key legal considerations, and a potential timeline.



cottonbro studio/Pexels

Meanwhile, the second series encourages business owners to maximize the value of trusted advisors, prep the business for transition, consider business valuations, and handle communications during the process.

Participants must complete Succession Planning 101 before completing Succession Planning 202. To gain the most comprehensive overview of succession planning for a business, participants are strongly encouraged to complete both the 101 and 201 sessions. There are several days and times from which to choose.

Bakken said thoughtful succession planning increases the likelihood that a company's employees, customers, vendors, and stakeholders can maintain continuity through an eventual transition.

"For the company's owner, it is likely 90 percent or more of their net worth is tied up in the value of this highly illiquid, difficult-to-value asset," Bakken said. "For them to ensure that they are able to accomplish all of their personal, family, and financial goals in their 'next act,' they must actively engage in succession planning with qualified professionals."

Jessica Starks, a broker with Transworld Business Advisors, said a succession plan helps a business owner develop a legacy that ensures the long-term viability of a company across its life cycle. Attending the Succession Planning Technical Assistance Program is a step in the right direction.

"I hope participants take away knowledge, guidance, and trusted advisors who they can confide in with their questions," Starks said.

There is no fee to attend, but pre-registration is required. For more information about the Succession Planning Technical Assistance Program series, please visit lansingchamber.org. ●

Reviving Growth

Local Organizations Encourage More Young Professionals to Call Greater Lansing 'Home'

By Jennifer McEntee

It's no secret that Michigan has struggled to compete with faster-growing peer states to attract and retain a population that will sustain the economy. In fact, Michigan is 49th in terms of population growth nationwide, ahead of only West Virginia.

"The Sun Belt has been for a long time gaining population, while Midwestern states have struggled to gain population," said Hilary Doe, Chief Growth and Marketing Officer for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, or MEDC.

The Greater Lansing region's population growth is trending similarly to the state overall, Doe said.

"We pull data for the whole state as part of the work to track Michigan's growth, and Lansing looks a lot like the state does in general," she said. "So over the last handful of years, there have been small ups and downs, but it's been relatively flat."

According to U.S. census data tracked by MEDC, the City of Lansing had 112,963 residents in 2022, up 1,130 people or just 1 percent from the year prior. It's a minor gain considering the city lost 5,655 people or 4.81 percent from 2020 to 2021.

The tri-county area's population data is likewise only showing incremental improvements. In Clinton County, MEDC estimates the population grew by 0.41 percent to 79,748 people from 2021 to 2022. Eaton County's population was up 0.04 percent to 108,992 for the same period, while Ingham County's population increased just 0.03 percent to 284,108 during that time.

Some of the state and local population trends are attributed to people moving to other states, low birth rates, and a spike in COVID-19-related deaths. Data collected by Guidehouse Inc. as part of Michigan's statewide growth initiative "Growing Michigan Together" also suggests our communities are getting older. Michigan's 65 and over population is projected to be the fastest growing cohort statewide — by almost 30 percent

by 2045, — while residents aged 20 to 34 could decrease by 70,000 during that time. Lansing's median age is 33.

All of these data points are pixels of a larger picture: to maintain the well-being of our communities and economy, state and regional leaders need to work together to attract and retain the working-age population.

"We have every reason to believe that by employing some of what we've learned, we can turn that around," Doe said. "In Michigan, we're really strategically positioned for future growth, and, frankly, the Greater Lansing region and the tri-county area have a lot going for them."

"In Michigan, we're really strategically positioned for future growth, and, frankly, the Greater Lansing region and the tri-county area have a lot going for them."

— Hilary Doe, Chief Growth and Marketing Officer, Michigan Economic Development Corp.

The MEDC works with more than 100 economic development partners to market Michigan as an idyllic place to establish growing businesses in vibrant communities.

Doe said that MEDC's marketing campaign "We Can in Michigan" hopes to draw future residents with attributes like walkable, transit-rich neighborhoods, major industries and start-up entrepreneurs, and abundant higher education.

"Our universities are producing incredible entrepreneurs and young professionals. We want to really keep those folks in our state to build their companies here," Doe said. "We need to ensure those folks can build their futures here and see themselves staying here for the long term."

Homegrown Talent

Christopher Sell, associate director for development in the Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation at Michigan State University, has long recognized that Lansing needs who he calls "emerging professionals": students who are about to graduate from a local university, those who've recently graduated from here or elsewhere, or even mid-career professionals who grew up in Michigan, moved away, but are finding their way back home.

Lansing 5:01 hosts its annual DAM JAM MUSIC FESTIVAL at Lansing's Brenke Fish Ladder that celebrates Michigan artists as they perform in Lansing's most unique pop-up music venue, in-the-round of the historic architectural wonder.



"We are looking to retain and attract emerging professionals to consider living and working in Lansing long-term," said Sell. "We look to our backyard in terms of homegrown talent."

Sell launched the nonprofit Lansing 5:01 nearly nine years ago to entice young professionals to Greater Lansing by showcasing the region's varied quality of life opportunities. The Lansing 5:01 name suggests that Lansing has dynamic offerings after the workday has ended.

As Lansing 5:01's executive director, Sell works with several part-time staff and a volunteer team of young professionals to offer networking events ranging from breakfast series to summer music festivals. Since the nonprofit's inception, Sell estimates Lansing 5:01 has attracted more than 30,000 emerging professionals to the Lansing region with some 70 different events.

"We are anticipating that we'll welcome another 200-plus interns and over 7,500 emerging professionals to Lansing and

East Lansing this summer through events designed to illustrate our community's value proposition as a talent destination," Sell said.

Originally from Williamston, Michigan, Sell said he's found Lansing to be a wonderful place to raise his young family. The Greater Lansing region has much to offer young professionals: cultural diversity, modern downtown housing, interesting restaurants, a live music scene, Big 10 sports, reasonable traffic, and 20 miles of Lansing River Trail to walk, bike, and kayak.

"We know that for the last almost two decades, young people have been flocking to major markets where they can live, work and play downtown and get access to all these different types of amenities," he said. "I think no matter who you are and what you're interested in, there's going to be something here for you."

'Lansing: Be our neighbor'

Lansing 5:01's community outreach has primarily been via events. Now, the

Like the state of Michigan, Lansing and the tri-county region have seen relatively flat population growth. Census data shows that from 2021 to 2022:

- * Lansing had 112,963 residents, up 1%
- * Clinton County had 79,748 people, up 0.41%
- * Eaton County had 108,992 people, up 0.04%
- * Ingham County had 284,108 people, up 0.03%

Source: Michigan Economic Development Corporation



The new talent attraction campaign called “Lansing: Be our neighbor” aims to create awareness via local and out-of-state advertising about Lansing and invite people living elsewhere in the U.S. to see what this region offers.

nonprofit is expanding its reach with a new talent-attraction campaign called “Lansing: Be our neighbor.”

Together with Jen Estill of Redhead Creative Consultancy and Samantha Harkins of Hundred Place Consulting, Lansing 5:01 is developing outbound marketing to create awareness about Lansing and invite people living elsewhere in the U.S. to see what this region offers.

Local and out-of-state advertising could include websites, social media, print ads, transit bus wraps, and promotional videos, according to Harkins.

“You know, everyone talks about the renaissance in Detroit and how much Grand Rapids has changed over the years. And here we have the capital city with really strong businesses and a Big 10 university, and there hasn’t been as much focus on Lansing,” Harkins said. “We thought it would be great to put together this campaign to get people to think about Lansing when they’re looking to relocate.”

The tri-county region — with a variety of cities, townships, and villages throughout Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties — is worth more than the sum of its parts.

“We’re really Midwest nice, but it’s time to start bragging about ourselves,” she said.

The marketing campaign will be strategic in where it promotes the Lansing region, according to Harkins. For instance, a hospital closing in Idaho is an advantageous location to place advertisements about job opportunities with McLaren Health Care or the University of Michigan Health.

“We want to work with our partners to find ways to place ads in a timely, nimble way,” she said.

Within the region, “Lansing: Be our neighbor” will be a platform for local businesses and professionals to cheerlead for their hometown.

“We tend to be our own worst enemy. You hear people say, ‘We’re not as cool. There’s nothing to do here.’ That’s just not true,” Harkins said. “We’re putting more focus on the internal audience so that we can create champions and evangelists here in our community as well.”

The campaign is seeking business sponsors and community support but also individuals enthusiastic about growing the Lansing region’s talent population.

“I want people to feel like they’re a part of this really energetic group,” Harkins said. “It’s about people who are positive and forward-thinking about what we need to do for our region.”

“We look to our backyard in terms of homegrown talent.”
— Christopher Sell, Executive Director and Founder, Lansing 5:01



Lansing 5:01's Summer 2024 Event Lineup

**Annual Dam Jam Music Festival at Brenke Fish Ladder in Old Town Lansing:
Friday & Saturday, July 19-20**

**Lansing Link-Up at Delta Dental HQ in Okemos:
Thursday, July 25, 5:01 pm – 7 pm**

East Lansing ExtravaGRANDza in Downtown East Lansing: Saturday, August 24

**For more information, see
lansing501.com/events**

Bridging the Gap

Adam Green, president and CEO of the start-up Stunio, is doing his part to narrow the talent gap in the Greater Lansing region. His mobile app-based staffing platform connects local college students with area businesses looking to hire reliable help for quick gigs like events, catering, warehousing, and cleaning.

“There’s a general mantra around that young people nowadays don’t want to work and they’re lazy,” said Green, who graduated from Michigan State University College of Law last year. “The truth is they’re willing, and they’re able. They need work now more than ever with rising costs, but they just need better opportunities to do so on their schedule.”

Stunio — a name that loosely blends “student” and “university” — uses a software algorithm to connect employers to potential gig employees at local colleges in just seconds. Payments are also handled through the app.

So far, about 600 students and hiring entities including the Lansing Convention Center, the Lansing Lugnuts, and McLaren Health Care use the Stunio platform, Green said.

“To give you some idea of the volume, the Lansing Convention Center needed about 600 hours’ worth of work done this week through various events. So on a daily basis, they’re hiring at least 20 students per day for different shifts,” Green said. “Before we started working with them, I met with their CEO and he said, ‘It’s

unfortunate that we’re essentially turning away business’ because they didn’t have enough staff to hand out plated dinners or to host different events even though they had a talent pool right down the road.”

The Stunio software platform has the potential to connect employers with future full-time staff and introduce students to businesses they might not have otherwise known existed, Green said.

“Companies are using Stunio as a pipeline for talent where they’re getting their immediate staffing needs filled upfront while the students are making short-term money with flexible work,” he said. “But what it’s doing naturally is facilitating longer-term relationships down the road as students start to learn about these businesses in their community.”

Stunio jobs can be likened to mini-internships.

“We’re giving students more access points into businesses so that they have more experience coming out of college,” Green said.

Stunio is working to grow its own business with mentorship from tech executives and the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. Green said the Greater Lansing region is slowly embracing the idea of flexible staffing as an effective hiring option.

“It’s a fairly new concept for some people. They say, ‘What do you mean I can hire a college student like I can hire an Uber or order DoorDash?’” Green said. “The university is sometimes like an island amongst the Greater Lansing area. This hopefully is a way to make some more substantive connections.” ●

ATHENA WIN's May Girls' Night Out Blooms with Creativity at The Plant Professionals



ATHENA WIN hosted its May Girls' Night Out Event at The Plant Professionals! Participants were able to connect with each other while creating their very own spring wreaths. With the guidance of skilled instructors, attendees let their creativity shine and enjoyed a relaxed atmosphere filled with laughter and conversation. Girls' Night Out is just one of the many events designed to inspire and connect women in the Greater Lansing area. Visit lansingchamber.org to register for upcoming ATHENA WIN events. Whether you're looking to expand your professional network, develop new skills, or simply enjoy a fun and enriching evening, ATHENA WIN's events offer something for everyone. ●

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Career Catalyst: The Transformative Power of ATHENA Women's Interest Network

By Cathy Zell, Executive Director, Lansing Community College Foundation

When President Barack Obama took office in 2008, one-third of his leadership team were women, while many of the men were known for their dominant personalities. Consequently, “the West Wing was a well-documented bastion of testosterone,” reports Juliet Eilperin in *The Washington Post*. Women staffers recalled having to “elbow their way into important meetings” and often saw their ideas ignored until repeated by a male counterpart, who then received the credit.

Frustrated, the women adopted a strategy called echoing, repeating each other's points and giving credit to the original speaker. This forced men to acknowledge their contributions, and President Obama began listening to their ideas more often.

Does this White House anecdote resonate with you? Have you been frustrated when a man repeats your idea and gets traction? Maybe you've been outnumbered and interrupted in meetings; I know I have.

ATHENA Women's Interest Network (WIN) has significantly boosted my career through professional growth opportunities. I've learned to echo others' ideas and give them credit, making their ideas stand out. More importantly, ATHENA WIN provided a peer group to share successes and struggles, mentor each other, and offer support through their Executive Connections Group.

Each meeting focused on an ATHENA Principle. The ATHENA Principles include Live Authentically, Learn Constantly, Build Relationships, Foster Collaboration, Act Courageously, Advocate Fiercely, Give Back and Celebrate. Each meeting provided a space for me to share confidential matters and brainstorm solutions with executive women.

I've met lifelong friends, gained champions to advocate for me, and built a network to strategize issues. ATHENA WIN helped me transition through roles in three organizations, secure board invitations, and arrange key meetings to advance my organization's mission.

I hope you will help others by echoing their ideas and giving them credit, fostering a vibrant community where we all want to live, work, and play. ●

Thank You to Our New & Renewing Members

ATHENA Women's Interest Network is excited to welcome new members and would like to thank our renewing members for their continued support!

Corporate:

- Maner Costerisan

Individual:

- Susan Hengesbach
- Taunya Sims
- Gloria Mason

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Congratulations to **LaFontaine Ford of Lansing**, located at 5827 S. Pennsylvania Avenue, on the grand opening of its new location! Many friends, family members, local officials, and guests attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate this special occasion. The LaFontaine family has been selling cars for over 40 years and is proud to be a family-owned business. They are dedicated to bringing “The Family Deal” to communities all over Michigan.



Jungle Jane Promotions celebrated its 30th anniversary and new logo launch with a ribbon-cutting ceremony! Jungle Jane Promotions was founded in 1994 by Jane Mitchell. She takes pride in working with so many people and goes above and beyond to ensure that clients’ needs and expectations are met. The company values open communication and building trust with clients. They also understand the power of marketing with promotional products and make their clients their top priority.



Congratulations to **Copper Moon**, Lansing’s newest event space, on its grand opening! With a seating capacity of 200, Copper Moon offers a stunning setting for a wide range of gatherings, including weddings, showers, parties, and meetings. By choosing Copper Moon for your event, you’re taking the first step towards a successful and memorable occasion.

Business, Labor Organizations Endorsed Candidates in Lansing City Charter Commission Races Notch Election Night Victories

The city's organized labor and business communities are excited to announce resounding victories for their endorsed slate of candidates the Lansing Charter Commission. Of the nine candidates endorsed, six were successful on election night on May 7.



These were the following business and labor organizations who endorsed the slate of candidates:

- Capital City Labor Program (Lansing Police Officers Union)
- IAFF Local 421 (Lansing Firefighters)
- Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 333
- IBEW Local 665
- IBEW Local 352
- UAW Local 2256
- Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters & Millwrights
- Michigan Building Trades Council
- Michigan Laborers Local 499
- Painters IUPAT DC1M
- Operating Engineers Local 324

“The people have spoken loud and clear in the Lansing City Charter Commission campaign,” said Steve Japinga, Senior Vice President at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, “This is a very strong group of diverse individuals who will be serving in this capacity. We appreciate that Lansing voters agreed that these forward-thinking candidates who we endorsed have the leadership qualities they believe will serve the city best on this City Charter Commission.”

Learn more about the LRC-PAC at www.lansingchamber.org/lrc-pac. ●

The six endorsed candidates who won are the following:

- Joan Bauer, former member of the Lansing City Council and state representative
- Elizabeth Driscoll Boyd, former Communications Director for Governor Jennifer Granholm
- Ben Dowd, Associate Director, Community Economic Development Association of Michigan, Chair of Lansing Pride
- Brian Jeffries, former member of the Lansing City Council and Ingham County Commission
- Guillermo Lopez, Board of Education Trustee for the Lansing School District
- Muhammad Qawwee, President of UAW Local 4911

As the dust settles on the election, attention now turns to the next phase of the process. The newly elected Charter Commission members are poised to embark on the crucial task of reviewing and potentially amending Lansing’s city charter. With diverse perspectives and a mandate from the electorate, they are primed to undertake this responsibility with diligence and integrity.

“We look forward to the forthcoming work of the Charter Commission as they delve into the intricacies of our city’s charter,” added Japinga. “Their dedication to serving the interests of Lansing residents will undoubtedly guide their deliberations as they shape the future trajectory of our city.”



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Federal Regulatory Updates: Key Changes Impacting Businesses from Transparency to Labor Practices

There have been several recent announcements of federal regulatory rules across various sectors that will have a major impact on businesses of all sizes. Attorneys from Foster Swift provided participants of the Lansing Regional Chamber’s First Friday Public Affairs Call Update on May 3, with a high-level overview of these developments.

Corporate Transparency Act: This act aims to combat money laundering, terrorist financing, and other illicit activities by requiring certain corporations and limited liability companies (LLCs) to disclose their beneficial ownership information to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). The Act enhances transparency in corporate structures to prevent abuse and promote accountability.

Independent Contractors Classification: This refers to regulations governing how workers are classified as either employees or independent contractors. The classification has significant implications for tax obligations, benefits eligibility, and labor protections. Recent updates in this area aim to clarify criteria for determining worker status and address misclassification issues.

Overtime Rules: Overtime rules govern the payment of overtime wages to eligible employees who work beyond a certain number of hours in a week. Changes in overtime regulations can impact eligibility criteria, salary thresholds, and exemptions for certain categories of workers. These rules are designed to ensure fair compensation practices and protect workers’ rights.

Non-Competes: Non-compete agreements restrict employees’ ability to work for competitors or start competing businesses for a certain period after leaving their current employment. Federal regulations in this area aim to strike a balance between protecting employers’ legitimate business interests and safeguarding employees’ ability to pursue their careers freely. Recent developments may involve efforts to regulate the use and enforcement of non-compete agreements to prevent potential abuses.

As part of its ongoing efforts to stay knowledgeable about regulatory changes and facilitate informed discussions, the Lansing Regional Chamber is currently scheduling more in-depth conversations on these issues through the Lansing Regional Chamber Policy & Regulatory Education Series. These sessions will allow participants to delve deeper into the nuances of each regulatory area, understand their implications, and explore strategies for compliance and adaptation.

Visit lansingchamber.org for more information. ●



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NEW HIRES



Larsen



Webster



Rush

Martin Commercial Properties has added three new members to its team: **Jami Larsen** as senior vice president of accounting and operations, **Stephanie**

Webster as a transaction coordinator, and **Wyatt Rush** as an associate. Martin has offices in East Lansing and Grand Rapids.



Feltzer

Choose Lansing has added **Abby Feltzer** to its team as sales and services coordinator. Feltzer has prior sales experience in Lansing and holds a bachelor's

degree from Western Michigan University. Her responsibilities will include administrative sales support, as well as event and meeting coordination.

LAFCU has made three recent appointments: **David Ostrowski** to enterprise project manager of the Michigan credit union, **Zachary Emerson** as mortgage loan officer, and **Brook Jones** as commercial loan officer. Ostrowski oversees the overall direction, implementation, execution, control, and project management of enterprise-wide projects. Meanwhile, Emerson and Jones joined the credit



Ostrowski



Emerson



Jones

union's lending department to provide personalized service and tailored financial solutions for its members. Emerson's primary responsibility as a mortgage loan officer is actively growing LAFCU's mortgage portfolio through strategic activities. As a commercial loan officer, Jones assists current and potential LAFCU members with their lending needs by providing a comprehensive range of products and overseeing loan applications.



Menke

Custom Built Design & Remodeling is excited to announce the addition of **Cullen Menke** to its team as a Project Development Advisors. With a background in service – devoting 3 years of non-profit work in Eastern Europe – Menke infuses his professionalism with selflessness and compassion. His dedication to understanding peoples' needs, no matter where they're from, inspires him to give back to the Lansing community through his new position – guiding clients to love their homes again.

PROMOTIONS



Starr

Damian Starr has been promoted to project director at Lansing-based commercial construction company **WIELAND**. Starr joined WIELAND in 2005 as an intern, advanced to assistant project manager, then to project manager, and senior project manager. He has managed numerous key clients for WIELAND. As a WIELAND project director, Starr will oversee a team of employees handling construction projects in Michigan and nationwide.



Schneider

Choose Lansing has promoted **Dani Schneider** to sales manager. Formerly the organization's sales and services coordinator, Schneider has played a key role in booking short-term events, planning Choose Lansing meetings, and providing other essential support to the sales and services team. She joined Choose Lansing in 2022. In her new role, Schneider will focus on selling to social, military, education, religious, and fraternal groups, in addition to assisting with MSU market growth.

APPOINTMENTS

Angela Chia-Chen Chen has been appointed to the first endowed chair position in the College of Nursing at Michigan State University, to be funded by a \$1.5 million gift from **McLaren Greater Lansing**. Dr. Chen joined the college last summer and is one of the few nurse scientists using technology to address risky behaviors and promote mental



health and vaccination. In her new role, Dr. Chen will work to bridge the gap between research and practice in behavioral mental health nursing.

Human services organization **Highfields** has welcomed **Jorma Duran** to its board of directors for the first time. Duran is the anchor and managing editor for WLNS' 6 News This Morning. **Sam Davis**, director of officials for the Michigan High School Athletic Association, returns for his fourth term on the Highlands board and takes the position of board secretary.



From left, Highfields Past Board Chair Robert Easterly, new board members Jorma Duran and Sam Davis, and Highfields CEO and President Brian Philson.

AWARDS

Peckham, Inc. has been selected to receive the Employer Support of the Guard "Above and Beyond Award." The recognition is presented to employers who provide an exceptional level of support to their National Guard and Reserve employees. The nomination came from employees who feel supported as they

maintain their military careers while working at Peckham. The Michigan Committee for ESGR is the Department of Defense agency tasked with gaining and maintaining employer support for those who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. Peckham, Inc. is a nonprofit community vocational rehabilitation organization.



Garza

Valencia Garza, emergency medicine technician at **McLaren Greater Lansing**, has been recognized as one of the Lansing Latino Health Alliance's

2023 Outstanding Hispanic/Latino Caregivers. The award is given annually to a caregiver who has significantly impacted a patient's

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life, exceeded expectations in carrying out their responsibilities, and demonstrated exceptional professionalism in the workplace. Garza was nominated for the award by her co-workers. Garza has worked in health care for more than 12 years and with McLaren for the last six years.



Peffley

in their career and service to their community. Richard Peffley graduated from Lansing Community College in 1982 with an associate degree in science. He has since devoted

Lansing Community College has named **Richard Peffley** its 2024 Distinguished Alumni. This award honors an outstanding alum who has excelled

his career to public utility service, currently as general manager of the Lansing Board of Water and Light, Michigan's largest publicly owned utility. His experience at the utility has included overseeing contract negotiations between General Motors and Ultium for BWL to provide power for a new battery cell manufacturing plant, a transformational \$2.6 billion investment that will support electric vehicle production in Lansing for the next generation. He was also project manager for the \$182 million natural gas-fired REO Cogeneration Plant and Headquarters, completed in 2013. Additionally, Peffley oversaw the removal of all lead water service lines in 2016, making BWL the second utility in the country to do so.

McLaren Greater Lansing nurse **Jill Murphy** was honored with the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses. The award is part of



Murphy

"I had the pleasure of meeting Jill while a family member was hospitalized at McLaren Greater Lansing. I absolutely fell in love with this lovely individual. Jill, by far, must be one of the best nurses I have encountered in the medical field over the past 40 years."

the DAISY Foundation's program to recognize the exceptional care nurses provide every day. The nomination, submitted by a patient's family member, read:

Brandon Weaver and **Amanda Beeler** of Lansing's **Washington Avenue Advisors** have attained their CFP certifications, and the CFP Board has authorized them to use the "CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™" and

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Beeler



Public relations firm Martin Waymire was presented with the Silver Anvil for public relations excellence by the Public Relations Society of America.

Coalition to expand the state’s earned income tax credit to a 30 percent match of the federal credit, alongside clients Michigan Future, Inc., the Michigan League for Public Policy, and the Michigan Consensus Policy Project. This is Martin Waymire’s third Silver Anvil in the past six years.

Peckham, Inc. has been certified as a gold-level Veteran-Friendly Employer for the third consecutive year by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. MVAA recognizes organizations based on their commitment to recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining veteran talent. Peckham serves nearly 200 veterans across its five lines of business and has strategic partnerships with government agencies and community service providers. To receive the gold-level distinction, organizations must have a 75 percent retention rate of employed veterans over a 12-month period, as well as several veteran-specific programs or hiring initiatives.

COMPANY NEWS

McLaren Greater Lansing, part of statewide McLaren Health Care, has announced plans to expand with the construction of an ambulatory care campus in Grand Ledge. The nearly \$40 million project will be anchored by a freestanding, 17-room emergency department and include additional clinical space, increasing access to commonly used and in-demand

health services such as diagnostic imaging, lab services, and family medicine. Located along Saginaw Highway just west of Nixon Road, construction is set to begin in the summer of 2024. The campus will be ready to treat its first patient in Fall 2025.

The **Eaton County Transportation Authority** has launched its second Connector service in Eaton County, just months after the Charlotte Connector, Route 80, returned to service. The Grand Ledge Connector, Route 81, travels from the Grand Ledge Meijer to the Delta Township Walmart as of May 1st, and operates 6:50 a.m. to 6:50 p.m. Monday through Friday. Saturday service starts with an 8:30 a.m. departure from the Delta Township Walmart; the last departure from the Grand Ledge Meijer is at 4:50 p.m. Buses serve stops on a one-hour frequency, including the Grand Ledge Meijer, Grand Ledge High School, Relevant Academy, Grand Ledge City Hall, Serenity Place Apartments, FunTyme Adventure Parks, Townsend on the Park Apartments, and Delta Township Walmart. The Connector travels along Saginaw Highway between Delta Township and the City of Grand Ledge. Commuters can connect to CATA’s Route 3 on Marketplace Boulevard for continued eastbound travel in Delta Township or to downtown Lansing.



Burgee

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Burgee

has been recognized by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* as a “Michigan Go-To Lawyer” in 2024 for

business transactions. *Michigan Lawyers Weekly’s* program honors leading lawyers in a particular field of law as nominated by their peers. Burgee serves as co-chair of Fraser Trebilcock’s business and tax department and chair of the firm’s employee benefits department. He has over a decade of experience assisting business clients and entrepreneurs with startups, acquisitions, succession, and growth planning, as well as more general legal guidance such as navigating civil matters, regulatory compliance, employee benefits, and human relations.

Lansing, Mich.-based public relations and digital marketing firm **Martin Waymire** won the Silver Anvil for public relations excellence at a May ceremony in New York City. The Public Relations Society of America recognized the firm for its work with the Michigan EITC



Johnson Sign Co., a full-service sign company specializing in custom electric commercial signage, is celebrating 60 years in business. What first started as a hand-painted sign operation

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

became custom-fabricated electric signs consisting of computerized graphics, steel, aluminum, LED lighting, routing, and electronic message centers. Today the company operates with five locations, 40,000 square feet of manufacturing space, 16 trucks, and 60 employees. Throughout its 60 years in business, Johnson Sign Co. participated in large brand rollouts for major hospital conversions like Trinity Health, Allegiance Health, and Henry Ford and national and regional bank accounts Flagstar, MSUFCU, and Bank of Ann Arbor. Some of their most iconic custom work includes manufacturing and installing the Metro Detroit Spirit Airlines logo and popular Arborland "A" in the Ann Arbor area.



McLaren Greater Lansing, part of statewide McLaren Health Care, has partnered with Lansing-based Digestive Health Institute, part of Pinnacle GI Partners. The partnership enhances and expands Lansing's access to comprehensive gastrointestinal and colorectal specialty care. As the largest practice of GI providers in Michigan, DHI will add nine GI providers to McLaren Greater Lansing: six general gastroenterologists and three colorectal surgeons. In addition to diagnosing, treating, and maintaining chronic digestive disease conditions such as Crohn's disease and irritable bowel syndrome, specialists will also perform endoscopy services, including colonoscopies and screenings for colorectal cancers.

Cristo Rey Community Center and St. Vincent Catholic Charities have

joined forces to create **Catholic Charities of Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton Counties**. The recent merger is intended to address the changing and growing needs of vulnerable individuals and families in the tri-county region. **Joe Garcia** is the new CEO of Catholic Charities, having served as CEO of Cristo Rey since 2013. By unifying resources, Catholic Charities expects to be better equipped to serve all those who rely on their assistance.



Fostering Futures Scholarship Trust Fund recently hosted its 10th annual fundraising dinner and silent auction.

The Michigan nonprofit **Fostering Futures Scholarship Trust Fund** recently hosted its 10th annual fundraising dinner and silent auction at the Kalamazoo Radisson Hotel. This year's dinner event raised nearly \$40,000 for scholarships for foster youth to pursue their college education in Michigan. The next fundraiser is the annual Pizza Party on the Capitol Lawn on Tuesday, June 18th. Tickets and information are available on the Michigan Education Trust website at www.setwithmet.com. ●

Saving the Family Cottage



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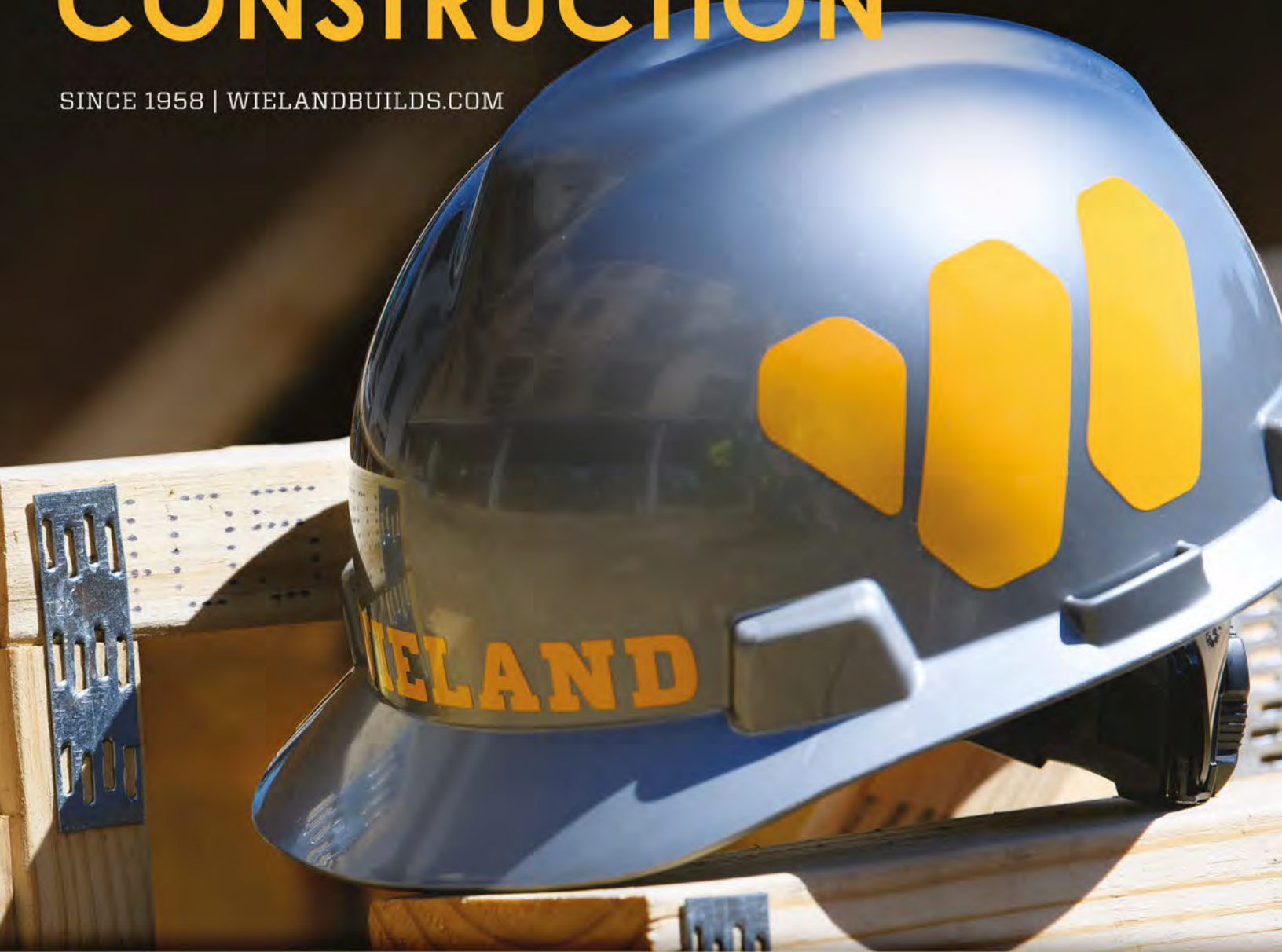
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