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FOCUS

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

NOVEMBER 2024



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Celebrating 19 Years of Regional Growth

I'm honored once again to commemorate the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce's annual Celebration of Regional Growth Awards (CORG), a salute to local economic growth now in its 19th year.

It's important that we take time each year to recognize and celebrate the investments so many leading businesses make throughout the Lansing region. Since its inception, the awards have honored 90 businesses that have invested well over \$3 billion locally. Past CORG recipients have included MSU Federal Credit Union, McLaren Greater Lansing, Cinnaire, Dart Corp., Neogen Corp., General Motors, Pratt Whitney, and the Capital Region International Airport.

The five 2024 CORG honorees are Amazon, Capital Area Housing Partnership, Grewal Hall at 224, Midwest Ace, and Midwest Press & Automation.

This year's honorees are uniquely shaping the region for current and future economic growth while showing consideration for local history. For instance, the Capital Area Housing Partnership is being recognized for its \$35 million Walter French redevelopment project, which involves repurposing the historic Walter H. French Junior High School into affordable housing units and a childcare facility. CAHP is not only revitalizing a landmark but also delivering critical community services.

Grewal Hall at 224 is being lauded for its investment in downtown Lansing, with the rehabilitation of a disused building into a modern venue for concerts, weddings, corporate events, charity events, trade shows, and more.

Meanwhile, **Midwest Ace** is being recognized for its latest investment in the Lansing Region with its new state of the art power equipment and hardware facility. Midwest most recently rebranded from Midwest Power Equipment with their expansion on Saginaw and Marsh Rd. in Haslett. A second location is slated to open on the corner of Okemos and Jolly Road this December.

Midwest Press & Automation LLC's path since its founding in 2010 has been characterized by continuous growth, adaptation, and innovation. The company is being recognized with a CORG award for the further expansion of its Delta Township location.

And as more global corporations see Mid-Michigan as a viable locale for doing business, LRCC is proud to recognize **Amazon** for its newest fulfillment center in Michigan, LAN2, and the first Amazon site in Delta Township. The e-commerce company now employs more than 1,500 full- and part-time employees in Lansing.

Please join me in congratulating these local organizations for growing their enterprises while providing needed housing, childcare, multi-purpose entertainment venue, retail options, and jobs that support our regional growth.

The CORG Awards will be held on Wednesday, November 6th, at the Lansing Economic Club luncheon; registration information for this event can be found at lansingchamber.org. I'd also like to extend my thanks to our CORG co-presenting sponsors, PNC Bank and Foster Swift, and Consumers Energy, for serving as the video sponsor. ●



TIM DAMAN
PRESIDENT AND CEO
LANSING REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



This year's honorees are uniquely shaping the region for current and future economic growth while showing consideration for local history.

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.

Thank You Renewing Members

American Red Cross-Mid Michigan Chapter
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 Clean Team USA
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 Comcast Business
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 Eaton Rapids Medical Center
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 Edge Insurance Group
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Chamber Milestones

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**Lansing Housing
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SM Saputo LLC
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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!

Welcome New Members

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www.sparrowbloom.com
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Stadium North Lofts
 (517) 580-0159
www.pivotal-communities.com/properties/stadium-north-lofts
 500 N. Cedar St.
 Lansing, MI 48912

November 2024

11/1 **FIRST FRIDAY PUBLIC AFFAIRS CALL UPDATE**
Friday, Nov. 1, from 11 to 11:30 a.m. via 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: No cost to attend.

11/6 **CELEBRATION OF REGIONAL GROWTH AWARDS**
Wednesday, Nov. 6, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, 219 S. Harrison Road

As part of the Lansing Economic Club speaker series, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce will honor five organizations for their investments that are reshaping and transforming our region during the 19th annual Celebration of Regional Growth (CORG) Awards.

Cost: Tickets are offered at no cost for Lansing Economic Club members, \$60 for LRCC members and \$90 for future LRCC members.

11/12 **NOVEMBER MEMBER MIXER**
Tuesday, Nov. 12, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Capital Region International Airport, 4100 Capital City Blvd., Lansing

The Capital Region International Airport and Eaton RESA are co-hosting a member mixer to show the importance of business and education partnerships and the Aviation Careers Institute.

Cost: No cost to attend.

11/13 **POLICY & REGULATORY SERIES: LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE – PAID SICK LEAVE & MINIMUM WAGE UPDATE**
Wednesday, Nov. 13, from noon to 1 p.m.
Lansing Regional Chamber, 500 E. Michigan Ave., Suite 200, Lansing

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Policy and Regulatory Education Series provides members with opportunities to hear from experts on specific policy and regulatory issues that may impact businesses at the federal, state or local level of government. Attorneys from Foster Swift will provide employment and labor law updates pertaining to changes to paid sick leave and minimum wage.

Cost: No cost to attend.

11/13 **ATHENA WIN: HOLIDAY CELEBRATION**
Wednesday, Nov. 13, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
The University Club of MSU, 3435 Forest Rd., Lansing

Celebrate the holiday season with ATHENA WIN at the University Club of MSU! Enjoy DJ Trivia bingo, a chef demo, delicious appetizers, desserts and more. Don't miss out on this festive annual event - space is limited.

Cost: Tickets are \$50 for ATHENA WIN members and \$60 for future ATHENA WIN members.

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VIRTUAL LRCC BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES

Please note all Business Roundtables are virtual in November.

Delta Township- Eaton County Wednesday, Nov. 6, from 9 to 10 a.m.	East Lansing- Meridian Township Wednesday, Nov. 20, from 9 to 10 a.m.
Lansing-Delhi Township Wednesday, Nov. 13, from 9 to 10 a.m.	Clinton County Wednesday, Nov. 27, from 9 to 10 a.m.

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The Power of Partnership: Advancing DEIB Work Through Collaboration

By Taylor Moberg, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager, MSUFUCU

Creating an inclusive workplace requires more than good intentions—it requires strategic partnerships. At MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFUCU), we've found that collaboration is the key to driving our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) initiatives. Here are some actionable insights for business owners looking to foster a more inclusive environment:

ENGAGE YOUR TEAM'S UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES

One of our most valuable resources has been our employee groups, like our CU Pride Affinity Group. By involving them in our decision-making process, we ensured that our initiatives, such as our Pride Month campaign, authentically represented the LGBTQIA+ community.

Actionable item: Build a platform where your employees can voice their perspectives and use those insights to guide your DEIB efforts.

TRUST AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY MATTER

Effective collaboration requires a culture where employees feel safe to speak up without fear of judgment.

When we renovated our headquarters, our affinity groups representing employees with disabilities and neurodivergent individuals gave input that shaped the building's design.

Actionable item: Encourage open dialogue and create a psychologically safe environment where all can contribute.

SMART PARTNERSHIPS LEAD TO BETTER DECISIONS

Partnering with experts and diverse voices not only drives innovation but also helps prevent hidden spots in your strategy. We've seen how integrating different perspectives leads to smarter decision-making and long-term growth.

Actionable item: Actively seek partnerships with individuals and organizations that bring new ideas to the table.

Building a stronger business starts with inclusion. When you bring diverse perspectives into the fold, you're not just creating a better workplace—you're paving the way for a more inclusive future for everyone. ●

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 **Maner
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Maner Costerisan Honored with National Growth and Workplace Culture Awards

Maner Costerisan, a full-service public accounting and business consulting firm based in Lansing, has been recognized with several prestigious national awards for both growth and workplace excellence. These honors highlight the firm's ongoing commitment to providing exceptional client service, fostering a positive work environment, and contributing to the Lansing community.

INSIDE Public Accounting (IPA) named Maner Costerisan one of the 2024 **Best of the Best CPA Firms** for the second consecutive year, placing the firm in the top echelon of accounting firms nationwide. This award, presented to only 75 firms annually, evaluates over 35 performance metrics, including growth, governance, and professional development. Additionally, Maner Costerisan moved up 13 spots in the IPA's **Top 200 Firms** ranking, securing the #127 position for 2024, compared to #140 the previous year. This recognition not only showcases the firm's financial growth but also its commitment to long-term planning and continuous improvement.



Maner Wealth team members participate in ax throwing during the firm's annual Winter Celebration at High Caliber in Okemos.

named one of *Accounting Today's* 2024 **Best Firms to Work For**, ranking #27 nationally in the mid-sized firm category. The firm was also recognized as one of Southeast Michigan's **Best Places to Work** by *Crain's Detroit Business* for the third consecutive year. These awards reflect the firm's commitment to supporting its employees through career development, wellness initiatives, and a strong emphasis on work-life balance.

Maner Costerisan is also deeply committed to giving back to the Lansing community. Through its Maner Cares program, the firm's employees volunteer their time and resources to local organizations. One notable example is the Day of Impact, held every year in early November, where staff members volunteer at places such as the Greater Lansing Food Bank. This annual event exemplifies the firm's dedication to making a positive impact on the community it has called home for nearly 120 years. ●



Through its Maner Cares program, the firm's employees volunteer their time and resources to local organizations.

Trey Williams, CPA, President of Maner Costerisan, attributes these achievements to the hard work and dedication of the entire team. "We are incredibly proud to be recognized among the top accounting firms in the nation," Williams said. "Our team's commitment to excellence and growth has been instrumental in earning these honors, and we remain focused on delivering the highest quality service to our clients."

In addition to its growth awards, Maner Costerisan has been honored for its outstanding workplace culture. For the ninth consecutive year, the firm was

SHARE YOUR COMPANY NEWS

LRCC members can send a press release and photo about new hires, promotions, company recognitions or awards to lansingchamber.org/contactus and we will share it in our popular Members on the Move section.

Small Businesses Can Help Thwart Cybercrimes

TAKING PROACTIVE MEASURES IS THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

Cybercrimes can happen to anyone. You click on a link that at first glance looks legitimate or respond to an email that's just one letter off from the real thing, and before you know it, you've downloaded malware or divulged sensitive personal information.

Cybersecurity crimes can cost a small business thousands of dollars while putting enterprise and customer data at risk.

Andy Zarkovich, solutions advisor for Lansing-based Providence Consulting, advises small businesses to be aware of the latest cybersecurity threats and to take proactive measures to prevent technology breaches.

"You just have to be hyper-vigilant and aware. The hackers are getting good," said Zarkovich, who admits he recently almost fell for a phishing email that claimed he was running out of data storage. "It had the logo on it and everything. I mean, it looked really good, like it was from Microsoft."

Zarkovich said the first line of defense for small businesses should be training employees on what cybersecurity threats look like, how to create complex passwords, and how to use multi-factor authentication for an extra layer of security.

"If I could preach to the world, training is the biggest thing," he said. "If you have \$10 to spend, put \$9 of it on training."

A variety of advanced antivirus software on the market can help prevent cyberattacks and identify if a hacker has entered the computer network. Zarkovich encourages small businesses to work with technology advisors to determine which tools can best safeguard their unique digital environment, like email delivery systems that better block spam before it ever reaches an employee.

Short- and long-term data backup systems are also essential in case of a cyber threat. Ransomware, a kind of malware that can prevent a business from accessing its own online files until a ransom is paid, can bring a company's work to a halt.



Depositphotos

Cybercrimes are likely more widespread than people realize because no one wants to announce they've been duped.

Small businesses should consider cybersecurity just another needed service, like banking, legal work, human resources, or accounting. ●

For more information about Providence Consulting, go to www.makingtecheasy.com.

If you are looking to take steps to protect your business or organization, please refer to the list of Lansing Regional Chamber members below who can help. More information is available at members.lansingchamber.org/lansingmarketplace.

- A.J. Boggs & Company
- ACD.net
- Adna Technologies
- Agate Software, Inc.
- Convergence Networks
- Dewpoint
- Endeavor IT
- Kunz, Leigh & Associates
- Liquid Web, Inc.
- Madeira Networks
- MetroNet
- TeamLogic IT
- Thatch Computer Consulting
- T-Mobile For Business

Eaton County Economic Crimes Unit Helps Businesses Recoup Losses

BUSINESSES ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT ECU AS HOLIDAY SEASON APPROACHES

A bookkeeper embezzles from a small shop. Someone walks out of a retail store without paying for a new pair of shoes. Another rents equipment from the local hardware store but never returns it.

Businesses lose money on these kinds of crimes, and paying customers see higher prices.



Lloyd

The Eaton County Economic Crime Unit is working to offset those losses. Since its creation in 2002, the government entity has returned more than \$9 million in restitution to area merchants, according to Eaton County Prosecutor Doug Lloyd.

“That, to me, says we’ve been successful because that’s money that the businesses are able to put back into their business or pay their employees or themselves,” Lloyd said.

The Economic Crimes Unit has an office in the Lansing Mall near the Regal Cinema and a county website page where businesses can file complaints. Merchants can refer bounced checks to the ECU, as well as shoplifting, embezzlement, electronic fund transfer crimes, social security fraud, and unreturned property like rental cars or library books.

“Our unit is there to help small businesses in any way we can,” Lloyd said. “When we originally began, it was with the idea that these crimes were occurring but police didn’t have the availability to do anything about it. So the way to handle that was to just bring it right to the prosecutor’s office and allow us to attempt to actually work with the individual who wrote the bad check.”

The ECU team includes an assistant prosecuting attorney, an investigator, and two legal assistants. Local college students also intern with the unit.

People accused of certain crimes—like writing bad checks or shoplifting—can qualify for a diversion program that requires them to attend an economic crimes course and repay the merchant for the stolen property and any bank fees.

“People make mistakes, but businesses shouldn’t have to be hurt because they made that mistake,” said Lloyd.

“We’re giving people a chance to straighten things out and make businesses whole.”

Not every offender can avoid criminal prosecution; ECU will still formally charge repeat offenders, those with extensive criminal records, or those who don’t complete the diversion program.

As the holiday season approaches, retail crimes will be on the rise. Lloyd hopes local businesses will contact the ECU if they’re impacted by theft.

“If you’ve got an issue about something that you think may be a crime, give a call,” Lloyd said. “Their job is to help businesses, and we want businesses to succeed.” ●

For more information about the Economic Crimes Unit, go to www.eatoncounty.org/164/Economic-Crimes-Unit.

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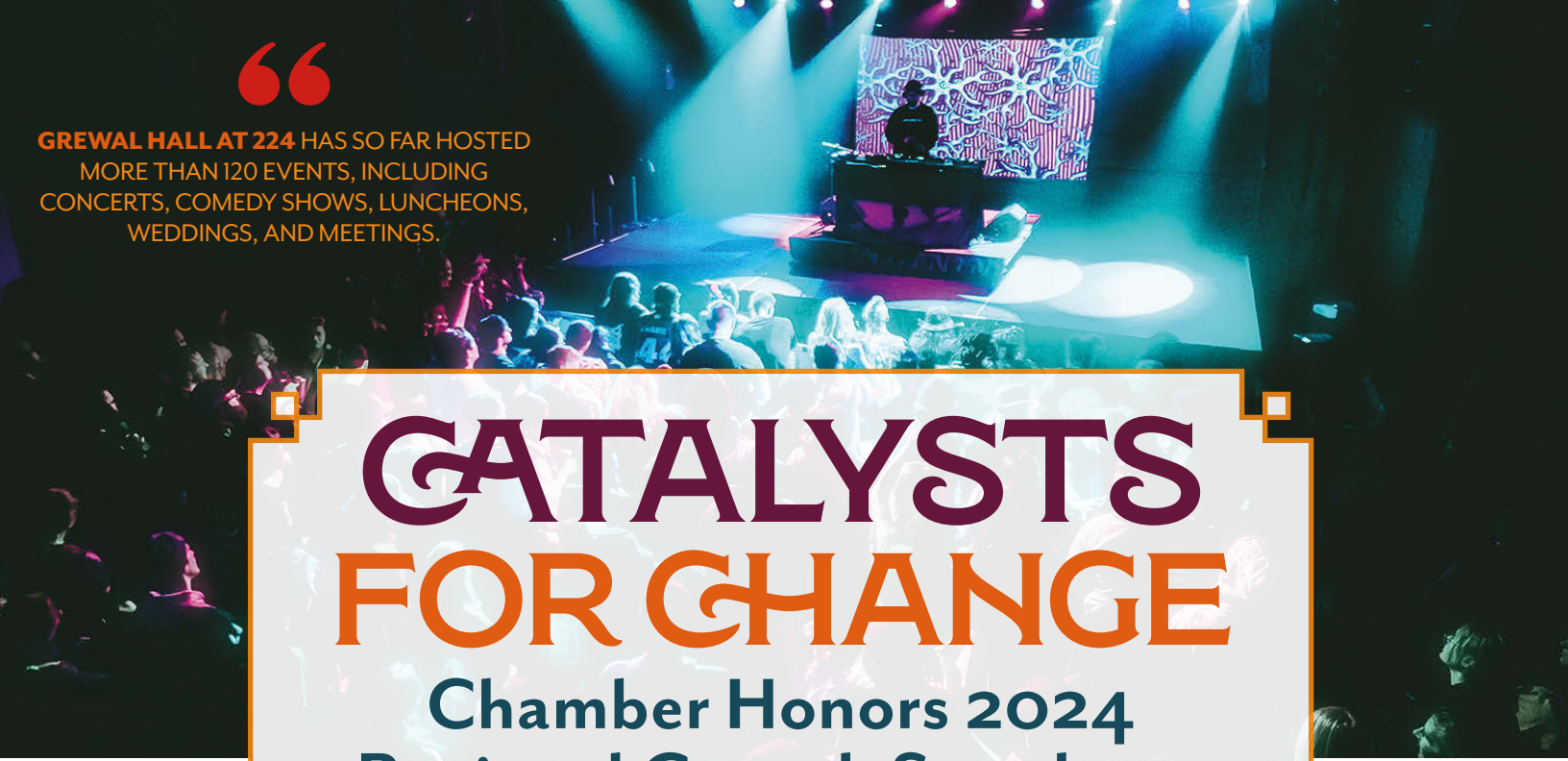
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CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

Chamber Honors 2024 Regional Growth Standouts

BY JENNIFER MCENTEE

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) seeks to recognize those entities that share the Chamber’s mission of growing a prosperous and vibrant region.

The Celebration of Regional Growth (CORG) Awards honor organizations making significant contributions to the local economy. Since 2006, LRCC has recognized more than 90 companies credited with contributing a combined \$3 billion in regional investment.

This year’s 19th annual CORG honorees are Grewal Hall at 224, Amazon, the Capital Area Housing Partnership, Midwest Ace, and Midwest Press and Automation LLC. They will be celebrated at a Lansing Economic Club luncheon on November 6 at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center.

“The contributions made by this year’s CORG honorees are impactful not just for the way they are shaping the region now, but also for how they are preparing it for future success,” said Tim Daman, president & CEO, LRCC. “These investments are not only driving immediate growth but will continue to serve as a driving force for continued economic growth in the years ahead.”

GREWAL HALL AT 224: DOWNTOWN’S NEWEST ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

The attached retail building at 224 S. Washington Square sat vacant for five years before Kevin Meyer

and his business partners purchased it on New Year’s Eve 2021. Dating back to at least 1926, the building had previously been a hookah lounge and a nightclub, and long ago, maybe a predecessor of the Knapp’s department store, according to Meyer.

“We had a vision for it,” Meyer said. “I will tell you, this was our first renovation/rehabilitation of what is called an ‘obsolete property’ in the real estate developer world.”

RBM Properties LLC, doing business as Grewal Hall at 224, is an ownership group of six members with mid-Michigan roots. Kevin Meyer, Chris Meyer, and Jenna Meyer are the principals of Lansing-based concert promoter MiEntertainment Group Inc.; Scott Bell, born in Lansing, is a festival production manager for MiEntertainment; Irving Ronk, originally of East Lansing, is digital director for Taylor Gang Ent., LLC, and the venue’s namesake, Mick Grewal Sr., is founder and managing partner of Okemos’ Grewal Law PLLC.

The group saw steel beams under the layers of aging drywall, ceramic tiles, and brick, “good bones” for a structure that could form the framework for a 6,000-square-foot, open-concept urban event venue with two floors of entertainment and hospitality space.

“We were trying to put together a venue for the market,” Meyer said. “You’ve probably seen them in other cities and other marketplaces around the country, and we thought Lansing and East Lansing should have one, too.”

Open now for one full year, Grewal Hall at 224 has so far hosted more than 120 events, including concerts, comedy shows, luncheons, weddings, and meetings. Meyer estimates total attendance to date at nearly 25,000 guests. About 50 people work part-time for Grewal Hall as guest services, bartenders, and event security.

“We’re certainly making a difference in downtown and having an economic impact. We’ve given people a reason to come downtown. They are spending money, heading out to dinner, going into the Irish Pub,” Meyer said, explaining that the mid-size venue has standing-room capacity for 900 concertgoers. “We’ve filled a void because there really wasn’t a venue like this in the marketplace.”



AMAZON: MORE OPPORTUNITIES WITH A NEW DISTRIBUTION FACILITY

Seattle-based Amazon unveiled a new 1-million-square-foot fulfillment center in Delta Township in September of this year. Built on 120 acres off West Mount Hope Highway, the inbound cross-dock facility receives inventory from small- and medium-sized sellers.

While not as sizeable as Amazon fulfillment centers in Detroit and Grand Rapids, the new Lansing site is an important piece of the broader Amazon supply chain, according to human resources manager Aarean Wooten.

“This type of facility allows us to increase our speed to meet customer demand,” said Wooten, noting that Amazon’s investment in Michigan has been estimated at \$15 billion.

She said that the Lansing-area Amazon site employs more than 1,500 full- and part-time employees and is still hiring. Hourly employees prep, sort, and pack inbound and outbound orders, earning an average wage of \$22 an hour. Support staff includes IT, safety, and HR positions.

“This is the opportunity to have a large employer that offers exceptional benefits in Delta Township,” Wooten said, citing benefits such as medical coverage that begins on the first day of work. “I see Amazon as a place where really anybody can grow their career. Anybody can move up based on their contributions; it doesn’t have to be based on their educational background.”

Wooten said Amazon has so far held Greater Lansing community events like a Halloween trunk-or-treat, volunteered with the local Salvation Army, and made a \$10,000 donation to Everett High School’s PeerForward, a program that connects low-income youth with colleges and careers.

“There will be opportunities to partner and for community engagement,” Wooten said. “We will continue to build those positive partnerships.”

CAPITAL AREA HOUSING PARTNERSHIP: PROVIDING HOUSING AND SUPPORT

The Lansing-based nonprofit Capital Area Housing Partnership is in the midst of the adaptive reutilization of a vacant, architecturally significant schoolhouse listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The nearly century-old Walter H. French Junior High School is being converted into affordable housing paired with supportive programs including a childcare facility. The project broke ground in June 2023.

Capital Area Housing Partnership executive director Emma Henry said the waitlist opened for the 76 apartments just over two months ago, and they’ve so far received more than 1,000 applications from people hoping to live there.

“That is an overwhelming response,” Henry said. “I wouldn’t say I’m surprised by that number, working in this industry, but it just goes to show you the need in our community.”

The apartment units range from one to three bedrooms with 456- to 1,438 square feet. Apartment construction is expected to be completed soon, with move-in to start before the end of the calendar year.

“
THESE INVESTMENTS
ARE NOT ONLY DRIVING
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GROWTH
IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

TIM DAMAN
PRESIDENT & CEO, LRCC

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE



The second construction phase will include the commercial side, including new Capital Area Housing Partnership offices, a daycare, and an auditorium. That work could wrap up next summer, Henry said.

“By having the residential portion there and then our nonprofit there as a hub, it really provides all of the resources you might need, whether you’re a parent picking up a kid from daycare and also are looking for financial education or one of our residents that needs some help,” Henry explained. “It really should be an improvement for both us and the community to have one central location that’s easy to access, and that will be able to serve all of those individuals.”

The partnership’s headquarters at the Neighborhood Empowerment Center on the former Michigan School for the Blind campus will become the expanded offices of a nonprofit refugee development center.

Henry said Walter French affordable housing tenants will include people making up to 80 percent of the area median income, or about \$50,000 for a one-person household.

“Affordable housing is workforce housing,” Henry said. “At \$50,000, we’re talking about starting medical workers, police officers, state employees. So when we develop affordable housing, we’re supporting the local economy and those essential workers who are living near their jobs in the communities they work in, supporting local businesses.

“Providing housing at all levels of the spectrum — market rate, affordable, and permanent supportive — allows us to be a deeper region and a more attractive place to come and work.”



MIDWEST ACE: INVESTING IN HASLETT

Midwest Power Equipment, founded in 1980, is a second-generation, family-owned business specializing in new, aftermarket, and pre-owned OEM parts.

The company recently invested in the construction of a new 35,080-square-foot building at 7410 East Saginaw Highway in Haslett, including a new Midwest Ace store in the design.

Jon Brown bought the Midwest Power Equipment from his parents after a career as a General Motors engineer. He applied to steward an Ace store so the business could thrive into the future.

“As a power equipment dealer, you kind of realize that there’s a ceiling to that, so we started looking at different opportunities to grow and be a part of the community and provide a place for some of my employees to retire,” explained Brown. “And Ace really fit the mold.”

Brown said the Ace Hardware partnership means Midwest Power Supply continues to sell its niche power equipment parts, but clientele can now also buy traditional hardware store goods and a wider variety of tool brands like DeWalt and Milwaukee. The customer base is a mix of residential and commercial clients.

The expansion has allowed Midwest Power Supply to double its staff size to 43 employees.

Brown said he’s always looking for ways to grow the business, particularly as his industry faces increasing competition from online retailers.

“
WE ARE TRYING EVERY DAY
TO BETTER
OURSELVES
SO THAT WE CAN PROVIDE
SERVICE THAT IS TOP NOTCH.

JON BROWN
OWNER, MIDWEST POWER EQUIPMENT

"If we're not growing, we're pretty much just dying, right?" Brown said. "We are trying every day to better ourselves and better the company so that we can provide service that is top notch."

MIDWEST PRESS & AUTOMATION: EXPANDING ITS ENTERPRISE

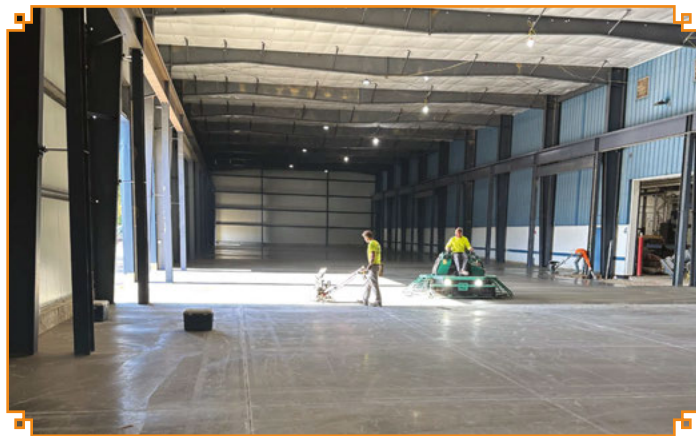
Lansing-based Midwest Press & Automation LLC is in the metal forming service and support industry, repairing and rebuilding press equipment while brokering the sale of new and used equipment.

Founded in 2010, Midwest Press & Automation is expanding its local footprint with a 27,342-square-foot bay and manufacturing addition to its existing facility.

Nick Martin, production manager and part owner of Midwest Press & Automation LLC, said the expansion should be completed soon, with move-in shortly after. All told, the expanded facility will be about 100,000 square feet.

He said that the larger space will give Midwest Press & Automation's 70-employee team more room to rebuild machinery, store inventory, and expand its automation capabilities.

"It's a big push for us in our growth as a company into



more of the automation side of things," said Martin, who also plans to hire 20 more employees. "I know it's in our name — Midwest Press & Automation — but we're going a lot deeper into the automation part now. It's a compliment to the services that we currently offer."

Martin said his company continually reinvests in itself and its employees through facility improvements, new machinery, and industry-competitive wages.

"We expect to have the best product out there, the best workmanship, the best support," he said. "Our rates aren't the cheapest. Well, I don't want to be the cheapest. I can't be the cheapest and the best." ●

A circular graphic featuring a woman with curly hair, wearing a red jacket and a name tag, smiling and holding a clipboard. The background is a collage of green-tinted images related to Lansing, including the Michigan State Capitol, a construction worker, and a person in a hard hat. A QR code is overlaid on the bottom left of the circle, with a blue speech bubble pointing to it.

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Congratulations to **BeneGuides** on their open house and ribbon-cutting celebrating their new location in Okemos! BeneGuides is here to help you make sense of healthcare. They help ease the stress of choosing your health insurance and make it easier to understand by providing you with the information you need to make the best decisions.



Big Moe's Kitchen celebrated its grand opening on 3011 E. Saginaw Street in Lansing with a ribbon-cutting ceremony! This new restaurant features salads, wraps, rice bowls, smoothies and so much more!



Stadium North Lofts and **Stadium North Senior Lofts** celebrated their grand opening of its two new affordable housing communities at their ribbon cutting ceremony in Lansing with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Congratulations to **Consumers Credit Union** on their ribbon-cutting ceremony in East Lansing! With 29 Michigan offices, 400+ employees, and access to 30,000 fee-free ATMs nationwide, Consumers Credit Union exists to bring a smile to your everyday life.



A ribbon-cutting ceremony took place at the Lansing Center to celebrate the installation of a new Mamava® lactation pod, co-sponsored by **LAFCU**. The ribbon-cutting event highlighted the importance of supporting nursing mothers by providing a private, safe, and comfortable space for breastfeeding or pumping. This initiative enhances the accessibility and inclusivity of the Lansing Center, ensuring it is a welcoming environment for all visitors. It also serves as a valuable resource for nursing mothers, supporting families and working professionals attending conferences, conventions, and community events.



Pine Hollow Partners celebrated the opening of its new location in Okemos with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house! Pine Hollow Partners is Lansing's first nurse practitioner-based clinic for early intervention in autoimmune diseases and various forms of arthritis.



Congratulations to **Playing Picasso** on the ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the grand reopening of their expanded new space, where guests can paint their own pottery in the studio in Lansing. Whether you bring your team to paint, reconnect as a family, or simply try something new, Playing Picasso is a great experience to enjoy some creative fun with those around you.



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ATHENA WIN Event Shines Spotlight on Women Leaders and Their Lasting Impact

THE EVENT CELEBRATED JULIE PINGSTON AND WELCOMED KEYNOTE SPEAKER TAMIRA CHAPMAN

The ATHENA WIN Evening of Empowerment on September 26th was a night to remember, celebrating female leadership and empowerment in the Greater Lansing community. Held at the Crowne Plaza Lansing, the event brought together over 200 attendees for an evening of networking, inspiration, and celebration.

One of the event's highlights was the recognition of Julie Pingston, President & CEO of Choose Lansing, as the 2023 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient. Julie's leadership, dedication, and passion for community building have made a lasting impact, and her recognition was met with applause from all in attendance.

The evening also featured an empowering keynote fireside chat, led by Sheri Jones (WLNS News Anchor), with Tamira Chapman, Founder & CEO of Storehouse,

who shared her inspiring entrepreneurial journey. Her story resonated with the attendees, reinforcing the power of perseverance and visionary leadership.

"Evening of Empowerment is one of the annual highlights for ATHENA WIN, and this year's event did not disappoint," said Leslie Batchelor, Chair of ATHENA WIN. "As always, it was a night of inspiration, celebration, and camaraderie among female leaders and allies. Our keynote speaker, Tamira Chapman, and 2023 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, Julie Pingston, are the embodiment of the ATHENA principles and truly energized the audience."

The evening was a powerful reminder of the strength and impact of women leaders. To learn more about ATHENA WIN and register for upcoming events and programs, please visit lansingchamber.org/athenawin. ●



Former Governors, Congressman Join LRCC for Democracy Defense Project

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted the Democracy Defense Project in October, where former Michigan governors John Engler and Jim Blanchard, along with other bipartisan leaders, emphasized the importance of educating voters on Michigan's election security measures. A recent poll showed that voter confidence in elections significantly increases when they are informed about 12 existing practices, such as pre-election machine testing and monitoring absentee ballot drop boxes. The Democracy Defense Project aims to reduce misinformation and build trust in the election process across Michigan. Learn more at www.democracydefenseproject.org.

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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Tackles Upcoming Labor & Employment Law Changes

CHANGES TAKE EFFECT FEBRUARY 21, 2025

As Michigan prepares for significant changes to labor and employment laws on paid sick leave and minimum wage/tip credit, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is taking proactive steps to ensure that businesses are prepared and informed. Set to take effect on February 21, 2025, these changes will impact businesses of all sizes across the state.

In collaboration with the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and other statewide partners, the LRCC has developed a two-pronged approach to address the upcoming legal changes: compliance and legislative action.

On the compliance front, the LRCC is offering a series of educational sessions through the LRCC Policy & Regulatory Business Education Series presented by Foster Swift. These sessions, scheduled for October, November, and December, will focus on the specifics of the law and provide practical guidance to help businesses adapt to the new regulations. Registration for these events is available at lansingchamber.org.

Additionally, the LRCC is working with its statewide



partners on legislative advocacy, aiming to address any potential challenges these changes might present to the business community. This balanced strategy ensures that businesses are not only prepared for compliance but also have a voice in ongoing legislative discussions.

The LRCC remains committed to supporting its members through these important transitions by offering resources, education, and advocacy, helping businesses stay compliant while promoting policies that benefit the regional economy. ●

A healthier take on health care coverage



You want your employees to get the care they need — and so do we. At Blue Cross, we work hard to provide the best coverage in Michigan. With more plan options, more efficient, higher quality care, and access to no-cost programs such as Coordinated Care Core, a Blue Cross plan adds up to smarter care and better coverage for you and your employees, so you can attract the best talent, and keep it too.

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NEW HIRES

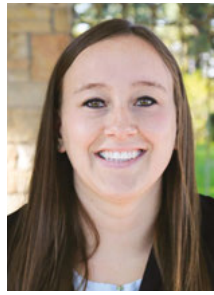


Fifarek

Fraser Trebilcock has hired attorney **John R. Fifarek** to work primarily in the law firm's Lansing office. Fifarek is an attorney with over four decades of experience in real estate matters,

advising property owners, developers, buyers, sellers, commercial landlords, and tenants in the development, sale, purchase, and leasing of property, environmental, land use, and planning matters, and in court and administrative proceedings.

Environmental consulting firm **Triterra** announced the return of **Taylor Twohig** to its team as a project scientist within the technical services team at the Lansing office. Twohig will help clients navigate and minimize



Twohig

risks associated with property transactions. She will manage and coordinate fieldwork, lead subsurface investigations, oversee remediation efforts, and produce detailed technical reports. Additionally, her responsibilities include reviewing historical site documents, analyzing subsurface conditions, and ensuring clients comply with due care obligations. Twohig holds a bachelor's degree in biology and environmental science from the University of Michigan-Flint.

Michigan Premier Events has welcomed **Marly Garrett** to its team as client relations and event assistant. A current Lansing Community College student, Garrett will assist the team with building



Garrett

and maintaining relations with current and potential clients and assisting the team with elevating client events that are local, statewide, and beyond.



Pitcher

Aaron Pitcher joins **Triterra** as an industrial hygienist in the firm's Lansing location. Pitcher brings over 20 years of experience in abatement and remediation of

asbestos, lead, mold, heavy metals, and other hazardous materials. As an industrial hygienist, he will focus on on-site air monitoring, analyte exposure sampling, technical report

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writing, and abatement-related activities. He holds an associate degree in general business from Lansing Community College.

AWARDS



Barbieri

Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC environmental law attorney and litigator **Charles "Chuck" E. Barbieri** is the recipient of the Ingham County Bar Association's "Thomas E.

Brennan Lifetime Achievement Award." The 2024 award recipients will be honored at the ICBA's annual dinner on Thursday, Nov. 14, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Lansing. The award is given to lawyers who have made significant and longstanding contributions to the advancement or improvement of the justice system and the betterment of the legal profession in the State of Michigan, while also having attained professional excellence. Barbieri has been in legal practice for nearly 44 years, in areas including environmental, general litigation and appellate, and First Amendment and media law matters. Since becoming a firm shareholder in 1986, Barbieri has mentored associates at the firm and has always been involved with professional and community affairs. His involvement has included two stints on the ICBA's Board of Directors and service as the ICBA's Board President, as the President of the Michigan State University Inn of Courts, and as the Chair of the State Bar of Michigan's Environmental Law Section. He is also a scoutmaster and a DePauw University's Alumni Board member.

The **Capital Region Community Foundation** announced the creation of the new Al and Jan Granger "Beacon of Hope Grant," a \$100,000 grant to be awarded to one nonprofit each year. The Grangers created the Beacon of Hope Grant for nonprofits that "uplift those facing adversity by

offering practical solutions that restore hope and human dignity." In this inaugural year, the Grangers selected not one but two recipients: The House of Promise and Habitat for Humanity Capital Region. Each will receive \$100,000 to further their missions.

PFCU Credit Union has won the "2024 Financial Services Top Workplaces" award, as determined through employee feedback captured by the Energage Workplace Survey. The survey assesses workplace culture, including leadership, professional development opportunities, benefits, and overall job satisfaction. The recent survey identifies PFCU Credit Union as an employer of choice. PFCU Credit Union is a not-for-profit cooperative with 13 locations from Flint to Caledonia, with 55,000 members and more than \$800 million in assets.

Triterra received the "Entrepreneurial Icon Award" at the 2024 Greater Lansing Entrepreneurial Awards. This recognition celebrates the company's growth, impact, and commitment to improving the quality of the natural environment and the communities it serves. The Entrepreneurial Icon Award is presented to businesses that achieve financial success while creating a lasting legacy through innovation, commitment, and an enduring influence on their field and community.



Howell

Robyn Howell, executive vice president and chief operating officer for **LAFCU**, has been recognized as a Crain's Notable Black Business Leader. The recognition

highlights Howell's leadership, community contributions, and dedication to fostering diversity in the workplace. Howell has been promoted three times since joining LAFCU in 2017 as human resources manager. Her most recent promotion to executive vice president and chief operating officer has expanded her responsibilities to include oversight of multiple critical departments. Under Howell's leadership, LAFCU's human resources department achieved milestones such as implementing new recruitment and employee engagement standards, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis. Howell's leadership has extended beyond LAFCU to community involvement, with active roles on the boards of the Boys and Girls Club of Lansing and the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Aqua Body Lab, led by CEO and founder **Hollie Town**, has been honored with the "Greater Lansing Business of the Year Award" just three years after opening its doors. The recognition highlights the growth of this women-owned business.



Peckham Inc.'s Veterans Services program received the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency "Employer Innovator Award" during the fourth annual Veteran-Friendly Employers Innovation Conference. This award recognizes employers or staff members who develop new processes, methods, or technologies to improve the hiring and retention of military veterans and their spouses. The award can also recognize initiatives

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

that improve the quality of life for employees. Peckham, a nonprofit community vocational rehabilitation organization, was among five organizations that received the prestigious award.

COMPANY NEWS

Middle Village, a business accelerator program created and managed by **Downtown Lansing Inc.** and funded by **Lake Trust Credit Union**, announced it is seeking applications for its 2025 cohort through Nov. 30. Middle Village is a retail accelerator program that empowers business owners by lowering barriers to entrepreneurship. Business owners receive programming and marketing support in this year-long program. Since 2021, the program has worked with 16 participants. All of those graduates are still in business, and six have opened brick-and-mortar storefronts in the Lansing region. Businesses interested in learning more or applying for 2025 can submit their application at MiddleVillageShops.com.



Triterra expanded its Grand Rapids office to a larger suite within its current location at 625 Kenmoor Avenue SE, now in Suite 109. The move into a more spacious office supports Triterra's continued growth in the West Michigan region. To celebrate the expansion, Triterra hosted a ribbon-cutting and open house for clients, partners, and community members. Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce led the ceremony, with food provided by Catered Creations. Triterra entered the Grand Rapids market in 2020 when Craig Mulica joined the firm as the West Michigan regional director. The company's corporate office

remains in Lansing, with additional locations in Kalamazoo, Alma, and Traverse City.

Michigan Community Capital received a \$65 million New Markets Tax Credit allocation in September, the nonprofit's sixth consecutive award from the U.S. Department of Treasury. The NMTC program supports businesses and real estate projects in low-income communities. Michigan Community Capital leverages the tax credits to finance projects that create quality and accessible manufacturing jobs, build affordable housing, and expand access to social services throughout Michigan. Locally, this tool supported the Allen Neighborhood Center and Neogen. Since 2005, Michigan Community Capital has deployed over \$350 million in tax credits to 45 projects in Michigan's urban and rural communities.

Lansing's **Great Lakes Christian College** celebrates 75 years this fall as a Christian institution of higher learning. From its humble beginning with 12 students in a log cabin, the college has grown to more than 220 students preparing themselves for a life of Christian service as preachers, youth ministers, worship leaders, and missionaries. Friends of Great Lakes Christian College were invited to a 75th Anniversary Celebration on Oct. 12 on the college campus.



Custom Built Design & Remodeling's new "Design & Remodeling Show" has officially launched. The first three episodes are live on the Custom Built YouTube channel. Each episode dives into real remodeling projects, offering expert tips and behind-the-scenes insights from the Custom Built team. ●



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