

# FOCUS

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE • JANUARY 2021

## EMERGENT BIOSOLUTIONS

ON THE FRONTLINES OF  
OPERATION WARP SPEED

### IN THIS ISSUE

2020: A YEAR IN REVIEW AT THE CHAMBER • LRCC GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM CELEBRATES 2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CHILD CARE CRISIS: IMPACTING THE WORKFORCE OF TODAY AND THE FUTURE



**WENDY HAMILTON**  
 Board Chair  
 Lansing Regional  
 Chamber of Commerce



# The Need for Continuity in Leadership

**A**fter the year we have experienced, all of us are eager to turn the page and move into 2021. The unprecedented events of the past year have left their mark on all our businesses, coworkers, family and friends.

We at TechSmith, where I serve as CEO, have endured the challenging adjustment to the new COVID-19 reality. We are grateful and fortunate to have the opportunity to endure. Every day we watch our valued neighbors, partners and favorite places shut their doors, lay off employees, and face an uncertain future.

It is because of the challenges that our community is enduring that I am particularly proud to be associated with the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) right now. In my role as a board member and the past year as chair of the LRCC Board of Directors, I have witnessed first-hand how the struggles of our region's small businesses have impacted the Chamber and how the outstanding the LRCC team has risen to the challenge to serve our business community in new and exciting ways.

The LRCC team led the efforts to form the RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force in which a diverse group of community leaders developed strategies to assist organizations in all industry sectors successfully navigate the COVID economy and safely reopen their businesses. The LRCC team also quickly shifted its many highly successful networking programs to the virtual world where they continue to meet an important need in the community.

The lessons learned during the COVID pandemic have also caused the LRCC Board of Directors to evaluate the importance of our work in serving the members of this great organization. Last year in this space, I wrote about the wealth of outstanding leadership on our board of directors. Our board features the best and brightest, and represent a diverse group of industry sectors, including insurance, financial services, high tech manufacturing, healthcare, technology, transportation, legal, advanced research and education. During the past 12 months our board has worked to identify innovative strategies to better leverage the collective talents these great leaders bring to the Chamber boardroom to better serve our members.

One of the critical ways in which we utilized the talents of our board was through our audit finance committee, which was instrumental in crafting financial strategies to assist LRCC through this difficult period.

Traditionally, the Chamber's board leadership transitions each January. For this year, our board has determined that LRCC and our members will be best served by keeping our full board intact for 2021. We expect that we will be able to leverage what we have learned in the past year to better serve our members, particularly through an emphasis on our business value committee.

On behalf of the full LRCC Board of Directors and the Chamber team, I want you to know how much we look forward to serving you in new and exciting ways in 2021. We wish you the very best for a safe, healthy and prosperous year. ■



**The lessons learned during the COVID pandemic have also caused us on the board of directors to evaluate the importance of our work in serving the members of this great organization and how we can best do that through the next 12 months.**



**JOIN THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE**

Leadership Circle members are proven business and community leaders. We value their commitment and applaud their efforts to strengthen our region with their leadership and appreciate the important role they play in advancing our organization.

## 2021 Board of Directors

### Officers

**Board Chair**

Wendy Hamilton / TechSmith

**Past Chair**

Patrick Dean / Dean Transportation

**Chair Elect**

Mike Zamara / Niowave

**Legal Counsel**

Patricia Scott / Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.

**Treasurer**

Andy Rose / Rehmann

**President**

Tim Daman / Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

### Division Directors

**Marketing and Communications**

Lisa O'Connor / Publicom

**Government Relations**

Matt Resch / Resch Strategies

**Member Services**

Michelle Massey / Dewpoint

**Regional Initiatives**

Kirk Ray / McLaren Greater Lansing

### At-Large

**Tina Brumley** / Auto-Owners Insurance

**April Globes** / MSU Federal Credit Union

**Jim Farrell** / Dart Container

**Roger Graff** / Farm Bureau Insurance Co.

**Glenn Granger** / Granger Construction

**Keith Granger** / Granger Waste Services

**David Lewis** / AT&T Michigan

**Darci Marcum** / General Motors

**Van Martin** / Martin Commercial Properties

**Jeff Metts** / Dowding Industries

**Ken Misiewicz** / Pleune Service Company

**Steve Quinlan** / Neogen

**Joe Ruth** / Sparrow

**Lisa Ellen Smith** / Inverve Marketing

**Todd Surline** / Hiring Solutions

**Dr. Kathleen Wilbur** / Michigan State University

**Kevin Zielke** / AF Group

**David Zylbe** / Jackson National Life Insurance

### Board Partnerships

**LEAP, Inc.**

Bob Trezise / LEAP, Inc.

**Grand River Connection**

Steve Hershfield / CBRE

**ATHENA WIN**

Jenn Sturdy / PNC Bank

**Black Business Alliance of Greater Lansing**

Dr. Alane Laws-Barker / Sparrow

### FOCUS

**Editor**

Ashley Sandborn

**Feature Writer**

Ross Woodstock

**Design**

Tandem Studios

**Cover Photography**

Courtesy of Emergent BioSolutions

## 2021 VIRTUAL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) has hosted its weekly roundtables virtually. The roundtables allow community and government leaders to share what is going on in the community and determine ways to advise the tri-county region.

*Registration is available on the LRCC website.*



## VIRTUAL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE 2021 SCHEDULE

### DELTA TOWNSHIP — EATON COUNTY

Wednesday, Jan. 6	Wednesday, May 5	Wednesday, Sept. 1
Wednesday, Feb. 3	Wednesday, June 2	Wednesday, Oct. 6
Wednesday, March 3	Wednesday, July 7	Wednesday, Nov. 3
Wednesday, April 7	Wednesday, Aug. 4	Wednesday, Dec. 1

### LANSING — DELHI TOWNSHIP

Wednesday, Jan. 13	Wednesday, May 12	Wednesday, Sept. 8
Wednesday, Feb. 10	Wednesday, June 9	Wednesday, Oct. 13
Wednesday, March 10	Wednesday, July 14	Wednesday, Nov. 10
Wednesday, April 14	Wednesday, Aug. 11	Wednesday, Dec. 8

### EAST LANSING — MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP

Wednesday, Jan. 20	Wednesday, May 19	Wednesday, Sept. 15
Wednesday, Feb. 17	Wednesday, June 16	Wednesday, Oct. 20
Wednesday, March 17	Wednesday, July 21	Wednesday, Nov. 17
Wednesday, April 21	Wednesday, Aug. 18	Wednesday, Dec. 15

### STAY CONNECTED. STAY SOCIAL.

 [facebook.com/LansingChamber](https://facebook.com/LansingChamber)

 [twitter.com/LansingChamber](https://twitter.com/LansingChamber)

 [@LansingRegionalChamber](https://www.instagram.com/LansingRegionalChamber)

 [Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce](https://www.linkedin.com/company/LansingRegionalChamber)

## THANK YOU RENEWING MEMBERS

A.J. Boggs & Company  
 Audiology & Hearing Aid Center  
 Auto-Owners Insurance Co.  
 Boji Group  
 Burger King - 505 E. Saginaw St.  
 Coolidge Place Townhomes  
 CS Tax & Bookkeeping  
 Dickinson Wright PLLC  
 Dusty's Cellar  
 Eaton Regional Education  
 Service Agency  
 Effectv  
 English Inn

Friedland Industries, Inc.  
 Liberty Coin Service  
 Michigan Credit Union League  
 Moneyball Sportswear  
 National Grid Renewables  
 Northfork Estate  
 Therapy Today Counseling and  
 Consulting LLC  
 Warner Norcross + Judd LLP  
 Wolverine Water Treatment  
 Systems/Michigan Soft Water  
 YMCA of Metropolitan Lansing

## CHAMBER MILESTONES

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

**Emergent BioSolutions**  
 20 Years

**SecurAlarm Systems Inc.**  
 5 Years

**Fairfield Inn and Suites by  
 Marriott-Eastwood**  
 5 Years

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Aldrich Auto Collection**  
 (517) 899-0147  
 2703 Turner St.  
 Lansing, MI 48906  
[www.aldrichautocollection.com](http://www.aldrichautocollection.com)

**One North Kitchen and Bar**  
 (517) 962-5056  
 2115 Bondsteel Drive  
 Jackson, MI 49202  
[onenorthdining.com](http://onenorthdining.com)

**AMF Transport**  
 (517) 721-1520  
 3310 Bardaville Drive, 7C  
 Lansing, MI 48906  
[www.amftransportmi.com](http://www.amftransportmi.com)

**Skymint - Cedar St.**  
 (810) 250-7627  
 2508 S. Cedar St.  
 Lansing, MI 48910  
[www.skymint.com](http://www.skymint.com)

**Brightwell Behavioral Health**  
 (517) 318-5889  
 3512 Coolidge Road  
 East Lansing, MI 48823  
[brightwellbehavioral.com](http://brightwellbehavioral.com)

**Skymint - East Lansing**  
 (517) 376-4640  
 3315 Coolidge Road  
 East Lansing, MI 48823  
[www.skymint.com](http://www.skymint.com)

**Health Wellpreneurs  
 Center, LLC**  
 (517) 885-5971  
 1982 W Grand River Ave.  
 Okemos, MI 48864

**Skymint - Saginaw St.**  
 (810) 379-0090  
 1015 E. Saginaw St.  
 Lansing, MI 48906  
[www.skymint.com](http://www.skymint.com)

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](http://lansingchamber.org) and enter your username and password. If you have not yet logged onto the site, please follow the simple password reset instructions. Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.

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 LANSING, MI**

**M NORTH APARTMENTS,  
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# A YEAR IN REVIEW 2020

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS DRAMATICALLY IMPACTED OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND WE ARE ALL WORKING HARD TO RECOVER. THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS FOCUSED ON PROVIDING AS MANY RESOURCES AS POSSIBLE TO SUPPORT OUR REGION'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO MAINTAIN STRONG, VIABLE OPERATIONS. BELOW IS A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER HAS DONE THROUGHOUT 2020 TO CONTINUE TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS CONTINUE TO CONNECT, GROW, AND THRIVE.

**1,867** IN-PERSON CONNECTIONS



**5,075** VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS



**95**  
EVENTS

**50** ROUNDTABLES



**800+**  
MEMBER MIXER ENGAGEMENTS

**91%**  
MEMBERSHIP RETENTION



**RELAUNCH GREATER LANSING TASK FORCE**

- RESOURCE GUIDE
- [RELAUNCHGREATERLANSING.ORG](https://relaunchgreaterlansing.org)
- MI COVID ALERT APP
- SYMPTOMS CHECKER

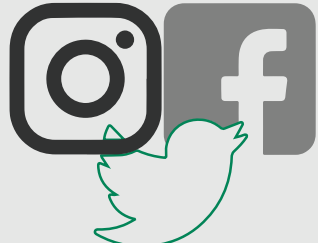


**\$28** MILLION  
GOING PRO  
TALENT FUND


**\$290** MILLION  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
INVESTMENT

**6,207**  
FOCUS  
PAGE VIEWS

SOCIAL MEDIA



**2,094,351**  
IMPRESSIONS  
**20,093**  
FOLLOWERS



**95%**  
ENDORSEMENTS  
ELECTED

# Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to Remain Intact for 2021

WENDY HAMILTON TO CONTINUE AS BOARD CHAIR, MIKE ZAMIARA OF NIOWAVE TO CONTINUE AS CHAIR-ELECT

**D**ue to the unprecedented challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) Board of Directors has decided to keep its full board in place for another year. Wendy Hamilton, CEO of TechSmith, will serve a second year as the board chair in 2021. Mike Zamiara of Niowave will serve as chair-elect and is in line to serve as board chair in 2022.

“This year has been challenging for all of our organizations as we have adjusted to the realities forced upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Wendy Hamilton of TechSmith, LRCC Board Chair. “We felt that the continuity of having the full board remain in place was in the best interests for the overall operations of the Lansing Regional Chamber.”

“I am excited at the thought of having the board leadership and full board serve together again in 2021,” said Tim Daman, president & CEO, LRCC. “The experience of having worked together for the past year will benefit both the board of directors and our Chamber team in 2021.”

In addition to Hamilton, Dean, and Zamiara, 2021 LRCC board officers include Patricia Scott, Foster Swift Collins & Smith (Legal Counsel); Andrew Rose, Rehmann (Treasurer); and Tim Daman, president and CEO, LRCC. The full 2021 LRCC Board of Directors is as follows:

**Officers (One-year Appointment)**

- Board Chair: Wendy Hamilton, TechSmith
- Past Chair: Patrick Dean, Dean Transportation
- Chair-Elect: Mike Zamiara, Niowave
- Legal Counsel: Patricia Scott, Foster Swift Collins & Smith
- Treasurer: Andrew Rose, Rehmann
- President: Tim Daman, LRCC

**Division Directors**

- Marketing and Communication: Lisa O'Connor, Publicom
- Regional Initiatives: Kirk Ray, McLaren Greater Lansing
- Member Services: Michelle Massey, Dewpoint
- Government Relations: Matt Resch, Resch Strategies



Hamilton



Dean



Zamiara



Scott



Rose



Daman



O'Connor



Ray



Massey



Resch

**At-Large Members**

- Roger Graff, Farm Bureau Insurance Company
- Glenn Granger, Granger Construction
- Van Martin, Martin Commercial Properties
- Jim Farrell, Dart Container
- Jeff Metts, Dowding Industries
- Keith Granger, Granger
- Steve Quinlan, Neogen
- Ken Misiewicz, Pleune Service Company
- Joe Ruth, Sparrow Health System
- Dr. Kathleen Wilbur, Michigan State University
- Tina Brumley, Auto-Owners Insurance Co.
- Kevin Zielke, AF Group
- David Zyble, Jackson National Life Insurance
- David Lewis, AT&T
- April Clobes, Michigan State University Federal Credit Union
- Lisa Ellen Smith, Inverve Marketing
- Todd Surline, Hiring Solutions
- Darci Marcum, General Motors

**Board Partnerships**

- LEAP, Inc.: Bob Trezise, LEAP, Inc.
- Grand River Connection: Steve Hershfield, CBRE
- ATHENA WIN: Jenn Sturdy, PNC Bank
- Lansing Black Chamber of Commerce: Dr. Alane Laws-Barker, Sparrow Health System ■

# LRCC Government Relations Team Enjoys Successful 2020

There is no doubt that this has been a challenging year dealing with COVID-19 along with a tough political election cycle. However, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) government affairs team has been serving its critical role of supporting and advocating on issues important to you!

The graphic below outlines the policy priorities along with key areas of success our team has had on your behalf at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

For any additional questions, please contact Steve Japinga, vice president of public affairs, LRCC at [sjapinga@lansingchamber.org](mailto:sjapinga@lansingchamber.org)



LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER

## 2020 POLICY PRIORITY SUCCESSES

### Regional Leadership

- Established the RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force to assist with COVID-19 guidelines and resources for businesses

### Local Government Financial Health

- City of Lansing Healthcare Retiree Reform implementation \$8M annual savings

### Economic Development Projects Supported by the Lansing Regional Chamber

- Delta Crossings (Delta Township) - \$200M mixed-use development
- Lansing Shuffleboard & Social Club (City of Lansing) - \$3M city market redevelopment
- MSUFCU Downtown EL Office (City of East Lansing)
- Temple Building (City of Lansing) - \$10M renovation
- Red Cedar Project (City of Lansing) - \$263M development
- U-Haul (City of Lansing) - \$10M development
- Allen Neighborhood Center Facility (City of Lansing) - \$11M development

### Regional Infrastructure

- Advocated and secured \$290M infrastructure improvements
- Completed the Coleman Road Extension
- Secured \$14.3M in broadband funding to expand internet access
- Secured \$1.7M for Forest Road Roundabout

### Regulations

- Signed into Law: Unemployment System Protections for Businesses & Employees
- Signed into Law: COVID-19 Employer Liability Protections



### Talent & Workforce Development

- Secured \$28M for Going PRO Talent Fund
- Secured \$30M for MI Reconnect Program
- Signed into Law: Criminal Justice Reforms | Expungement Legislation
- Signed into Law: Return to Learn Legislative Package

We're *here* for your business with great solutions at a great value.



Our improved plans give flexibility to employees and affordability to you where it's needed most. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network have the award-winning member satisfaction\* you want with the innovation options you need. Learn about how our improved plans can benefit your business today at [bcbsm.com/employers](http://bcbsm.com/employers).

**\*Ranked #1 in Member Satisfaction among Commercial Health Plans in Michigan.**



For J.D. Power 2020 award information, visit [jdpower.com/awards](http://jdpower.com/awards). Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

W002884

# Greenwood District Studios: This Is What Inclusion Looks Like

BY MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

**D**eeply rooted in sharing the desperately needed and overdue stories of underrepresented minorities, Greenwood District Studios, Michigan's first Black-owned production studio, stands as a beacon of what inclusion truly looks like. A beacon positioned proudly in the Lansing community—set on soon infiltrating into the entire entertainment and media industry.



“Greenwood will donate 25% of its profits to underrepresented communities in the Lansing area. We are also creating opportunities not typically given to minorities within the entertainment industry,” said Kristen Kirsch, executive producer and treasurer of Greenwood District Studios. “We have found the perfect location for our studio, which includes youth development, job creation, and mentoring. This is exactly where we are supposed to be.”



Amaru, a Michigan-made stand-up comedian and CEO of Greenwood, had far different plans for his future this time last year. He aimed to uncover why comedy clubs fail, hoping to tour the country and eventually transform the content into a documentary. Though not what he expected, Amaru soon found the culprit behind the failure of comedy clubs—COVID.

As the country faced an overwhelming health crisis, coupled with the senseless death of George Floyd, igniting more intense discussions and action around racism than ever before, Amaru set forth to use his talents towards meaningful cultural change.

From this idea, Amaru and his team of like-minded friends joined forces to create a movie studio with working sound stages, offering opportunities hyper-focused on minorities and underserved groups.

“One day, we were eating lunch across the street from the old Lansing mall cinema, and Amaru looked across, asking what we were facing,” said Kirsch. “In that moment, we both knew this was the place — 921 Mall Drive West in Lansing — perfect size, height, and location.”

The 24,000+ square-foot structure is set to become a full production studio by late 2022. Additionally, Greenwood will host drive-in movies, showcasing independent and urban films every weekend from May through October.

The studio name honors the lives lost and affected in the 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma



Amaru, CEO of Greenwood District Studios

massacre of Black Wall Street. Successful Black business owners created a thriving economy in the Greenwood District of Tulsa. After seeing the economic growth and development, white rioters burned the city, taking down buildings and people.

“This piece of history is little known nor discussed. We want to pay homage to those who suffered,” said Lisa Michelle, media relations manager of Greenwood. “Four of the sound stages will be named after a business or area in Tulsa. One theater will be transformed into a mini shopping section featuring names of Black-owned stores from that time.”

Fonda Brewer, Delta Township Trustee, remembers having a vision of more Black and minority-owned businesses in the area, representing the diverse Lansing-community.

“We are so ready for this—a Black-owned production studio creating content including television series, commercials, and films written, produced, and directed by Black and Brown people,” said Brewer. “Our region stands ready to welcome and support this level of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access—not just talk about it.”

For more information or ways to donate your time, talents, or money, visit [greenwooddistrictstudios.com](http://greenwooddistrictstudios.com) or [amaruflix.com](http://amaruflix.com). ■



# Coldwell Banker Real Estate Undergoes Branding Transformation

THE CB NORTH STAR WILL GUIDE YOU HOME

BY CASSADEE JACKSON, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

**C**oldwell Banker Hubbell Briarwood, a Lansing-based real estate brokerage, ecstatically rolled out its rebranded image starting Dec. 8. The right reason, the right team, and the right timing launched “Project North Star” and the start of a visual transformation.

The new branding position is being utilized by the nationwide Coldwell Banker network, including that of Coldwell Banker Weir Manuel Family of Companies, Coldwell Banker Hubbell Briarwood owners.

“Coldwell Banker has never gone through this massive a rebrand before,” said Kim Pollack, director of marketing and communication at Coldwell Banker Weir Manuel Family of Companies. “The new logo and values speak to today’s environment. There is a strong focus on society’s renewed sense of home amid the pandemic.”

The 114-year-old company is the oldest and most established residential real estate franchise in North America. Coldwell Banker has created value in the real estate industry by representing luxury real estate and a reputation of professionalism, refinement, and superior service. The current Coldwell Banker logo has been utilized over the past 42-years. The new logo, called the “CB North Star,” is a modern concept that blends tradition with potential. The star is a symbol of



excellence. But this star is unique; it represents the North Star. The North Star, like Coldwell Bankers, has the unique ability to guide people home.

“Right now, we are seeing major changes in the way people think about their homes,” said John North, chief executive officer of Coldwell Banker Weir Manuel Family of Companies. “Our homes have become the center of our world. As our needs in and around our homes have grown and evolved, we see people moving to meet these new needs. Our agents remain a constant, guiding consumers as they navigate the home buying and selling process.”

Embracing the new look will provide the undisputed leader of real estate in Greater Lansing with an opportunity to reintroduce itself to the local market. It will also act as a reminder that Coldwell Banker Hubbell Briarwood continues to be the most premier real estate

firm to do business with the region.

Coldwell Banker Hubbell Briarwood has six offices in the Greater Lansing area, including East Lansing, Lansing, Holt, Dewitt, Okemos. The main office is located at 1020 S. Creyts Rd., Lansing, MI 48917. To learn more about Coldwell Banker Hubbell Briarwood and how the CB North Star can guide you home, visit <https://bit.ly/3qPm3v9> or call (517) 321-1000. ■



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Our involvement in nearly every aspect of local governance allows us to assist municipalities with day-to-day general municipal law issues and complex litigation. We will work closely with you to develop strategies that both achieve your objectives and preserve the public welfare.

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To minimize claims, you need sound advice and solid preparation before an employment action begins. Our expertise can help you manage any employment-related legal situation that may arise.

### BUSINESS

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### PUBLIC UTILITIES AND ENERGY

We have a deep understanding of the complex issues affecting energy clients. From planning for renewable energy to addressing rate issues, no matter what the legal issue you may be facing, we can help you manage it.

# Black Business Alliance of Greater Lansing

BY CASSADEE JACKSON, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a widespread concern regarding business survival across the state of Michigan. The Black Business Alliance (BBA) took great notice of this concern and adjusted its focus to serve black-owned businesses better within the Greater Lansing area. The BBA of Greater Lansing was created to empower and educate minority business owners in the Greater Lansing Area. Time had presented the need to also ensure the survival of local black-owned businesses.



Laws-Barker

“The Black Business Alliance has a focus that is local, and that is significant,” said Dr. Alane Laws-Barker, MD/MDA, founder and executive director of BBA. “Accessibility to capital, equity, and resources have always been challenging for our community. Though now, more than ever, the BBA was obligated to ensure the survival of Lansing’s black-owned businesses.”

There are more than 130 black-owned businesses in the local community. Using technology, the BBA has been engaged with more non-traditional businesses and microbusinesses. The BBA has effectively utilized social media and marketing technology to increase accessibility for the businesses. A black-owned business directory was also developed to extend reach, increase educational opportunities, and create more overall community engagement.

“Virtual conversion has been challenging yet beneficial,” said Laws-Barker. “The utilization of technology and marketing tools has effectively connected people to people – businesses, customers, and resources. The BBA has generated a considerable amount of positive feedback.”

The unfortunate reality is that anywhere between 50-80% of black-owned businesses will be lost due to the pandemic’s effects. It is certain that the BBA has gone to great lengths to decrease those chances and safeguard Lansing’s black-owned business’s survival and prosperity.

To learn more about the Black Business Alliance of Greater Lansing, email [lansingblackcc@gmail.com](mailto:lansingblackcc@gmail.com) or visit [facebook.com/blackbusinessalliancegl](https://facebook.com/blackbusinessalliancegl). To view the black-owned business directory, visit [bit.ly/3q8udyb](https://bit.ly/3q8udyb). ■

# RELAUNCH. REOPEN. RE-ENGAGE.

The RELAUNCH Greater Lansing: Economic Rehabilitation Task Force has created a website and resource guide to provide the latest information to assist businesses as they continue to adjust to new realities brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**THE RESOURCES INCLUDE:**

- ✓ How to protect employees by screening
- ✓ How to create workplace distancing
- ✓ Proper cleaning & sanitation
- ✓ What to do when an employee might be sick with COVID-19

To learn more, visit [www.relaunchgreaterlansing.com](http://www.relaunchgreaterlansing.com)

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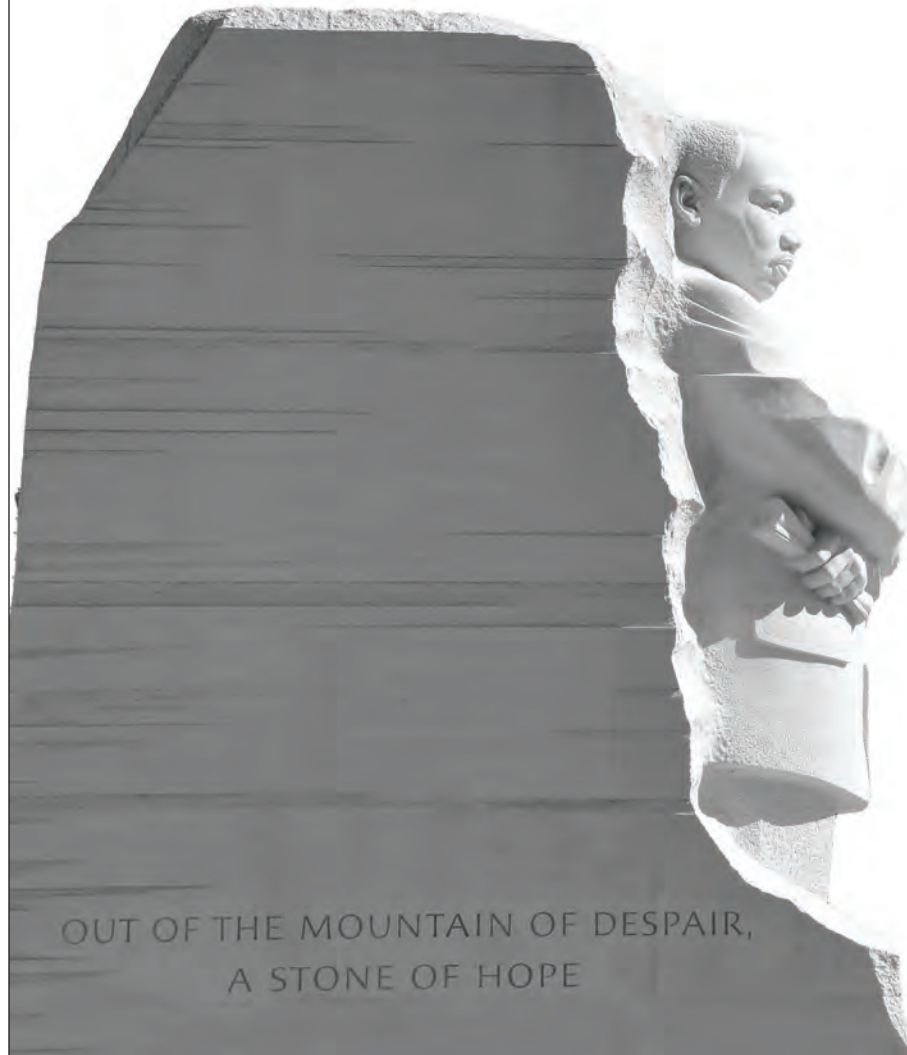
101 S. Washington Square, Lansing 48933 | 517.319.8000

# Save the Date

## Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Celebration

**January 18, 2021  
at 7 p.m. on WILX**

**Featuring a  
conversation with  
Dr. Bernice King**



OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR,  
A STONE OF HOPE



**DR. MARTIN  
LUTHER KING**  
Commission of  
Mid-Michigan



# EMERGENT BIOSOLUTIONS

## ON THE FRONTLINES OF OPERATION WARP SPEED



People in the Lansing region have been familiar with Emergent BioSolutions' work to protect and enhance life. The Gaithersburg, Maryland-based life sciences company that employs 2,200 people, originated in Lansing, and continues to maintain its vital role in helping to protect our armed services through the production of the only licensed anthrax vaccine.

Over its more than two-decade history, Emergent has worked to find potential solutions to fight emerging infectious diseases like influenza, Ebola, and Zika. The company has also worked with the federal government to prepare for and provide medical countermeasures to address threats, including botulism and smallpox. Now, Emergent finds itself on the frontlines of the worldwide battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. Emergent has entered into agreements to provide Contract Development and Manufacturing (CDMO) services to customers to support the manufacture of several COVID-19 vaccine candidates. It is in the process to develop two products of its own to treat COVID patients.



Muzzin

"We've always said we like this space of helping protect public health," said Dino Muzzin, senior vice president of manufacturing operations, Emergent BioSolutions. "What we've done over the past 22 years is that we have leveraged our core capabilities of quality and manufacturing excellence."

Emergent has joined the U.S. government's Operation Warp Speed to accelerate the development and manufacturing of COVID-19 investigational vaccines. Emergent has entered into agreements with Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, Novavax, and Vaxart to provide manufacturing services for COVID-19 vaccine candidates. For the COVID-19 response, Emergent's integrated network provides development services from its Gaithersburg facility, drug substance manufacturing at its Baltimore Bayview facility, and drug product manufacturing at its Baltimore Camden and Rockville facilities, all in Maryland. Employees from the Lansing facility are supporting COVID-related projects, as well.



Emergent BioSolutions held a ceremony at its Lansing facility recognizing the 50th anniversary of the approval of the anthrax vaccine. Building 55 in the background is dedicated to large-scale manufacturing of anthrax vaccines. Emergent marked the occasion by planting a "BioThrax tree" named after the product manufactured in Lansing.

"The goal has always been to support the production of hundreds of millions of doses for our CDMO customers," said Muzzin. "Our agreements with our CDMO customers are not dependent on FDA approval. All the Warp Speed players have been asked to build up inventory in anticipation that the products receive FDA authorization. We are operating 24-7 to manufacture drug substance for our CDMO customers."

Muzzin says the process for developing vaccines and treatments for COVID-19 is the same as any other product coming to market; this includes development, clinical trials, scale-up and launch. The quality of the product is never compromised. Muzzin says the partnerships that Emergent has developed are critical to producing quality products, and enhancing the ability to rapidly get safe products to market.



“We’re getting the best and the brightest from industry,” said Muzzin. “We can take a development cycle that used to take anywhere from 8-12 years and condense that into less than 18 months.”

Using its established hyperimmune platforms, Emergent is developing two investigational plasma-based treatments - COVID-19 Human Immune Globulin (COVID-HIG) and COVID-19 Equine Immune Globulin (COVID-EIG). The company is currently participating in a Phase 3 clinical trial sponsored by NIAID that is designed to evaluate plasma-derived therapy COVID-HIG as a potential treatment for hospitalized patients with coronavirus disease. The plasma for the COVID-HIG therapy comes from patients that have recovered from COVID-19.

“As they recover, their immune systems would have created antibodies,” said Muzzin. “People with elevated levels of antibodies to the virus can donate their plasma, and through our novel manufacturing process, we can purify and concentrate the antibodies to produce them at large scale and generate what we consider hyperimmune product.”

COVID-HIG is being developed as a potential treatment for hospitalized and high-risk patients and possible post-exposure prophylaxis in individuals at high risk of exposure to COVID-19. COVID-EIG is being developed using plasma-derived from immunized horses.

Emergent’s team has a history of developing and manufacturing products that are critical to preparedness and response. It started 22 years ago with the anthrax vaccine, which went to men and women in uniform. Employees at Emergent have always felt a sense of pride in what they were doing. Now, the company has an opportunity to be at the center stage.

“With our partners and CDMO customers, we are leading the fight against COVID-19,” said Muzzin. “We tell our team to never forget what their mission is. It is mission critical. We cannot fail. It gives us a sense of purpose. Though most of the COVID work is done at our east coast facilities, it is a one Emergent network philosophy. When we come out the back end of the COVID pandemic, we want to be able to say that, because of the efforts of the Emergent family, we helped turn the tide.”



We were built for this - to combat public health threats.

This is what we are all about.

This is where we lead the way.

Our ability to quickly go from development to scale up to optimization and our experience in supporting licensure puts us in a unique position to lead this fight.”

- Dino Muzzin



Muzzin also notes the company is much bigger than vaccines. The therapeutics business utilizes the hyperimmune platform for product development, such as the two potential treatments for COVID. Another unit produces devices to help protect our troops against chemical warfare agents. A couple of years ago, as the company expanded its reach, Emergent acquired a naloxone product to fight against the opioid crisis.

#### **Emergent’s Role as Corporate Leader in Lansing**

The Lansing facility was the first manufacturing site in the Emergent network. The Emergent campus on North Martin Luther King Boulevard in Lansing houses 330 employees plus contractors. It is a 24-7 operation manufacturing anthrax vaccine. The company recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the approval for the use of the anthrax vaccine with a ceremony that featured the planting of a tree at its Lansing campus.

Emergent has deep roots in Lansing and in giving back to the region. The company is very committed to making contributions to the region. Employees participate through Emergent’s eGIVE social responsibility program and through extensive donations of volunteer time. Muzzin recently completed a term as chair of the local Red Cross chapter. Emergent has also been very involved in supporting community partners like the Greater Lansing Food Bank, STEM programs in local schools, and in promoting the work of the Capital Area Manufacturing Council.

Emergent has visions of continued growth and eventually becoming a Fortune 500 company. Its ongoing focus as a mission-driven company committed to providing solutions to public health threats has placed Emergent in an excellent position to achieve its goals. The COVID crisis has underscored Emergent’s leadership position in helping to protect public safety.

“We were built for this - to combat public health threats,” said Muzzin. “This is what we are all about. This is where we lead the way. Our ability to quickly go from development to scale up to optimization and our experience in supporting licensure puts us in a unique position to lead this fight.” ■

# The Child Care Crisis: Impacting the Workforce of Today and the Future

The COVID-19 pandemic has elevated the need to address child care issues and how they affect families, women in the workforce, and employers. Two-thirds of parents today are having trouble finding quality care. Many women who have not yet returned to the workforce cite child care as the reason.

Michelle Rahl, vice president of member engagement, Lansing Regional Chamber of COmmerce (LRCC) spoke with child care expert Elisabeth Tobia, CEO, EC3 (Educational Child Care Center) about child care and issues that need to be addressed.



Tobia

**Rahl:** Could you paint the picture of the state of child care before and since the pandemic?

**Tobia:** Child care has long been a necessity for working parents. Before the pandemic, there were roughly four children for every available spot in licensed child care facilities – those families who can afford child care pay dearly for it. The nationwide average puts that number at \$10,000 per child per year. Yet, child care businesses like ours barely scrape by. Child care is a highly regulated industry. It is a rare program that can offer child care at market rate and be profitable.



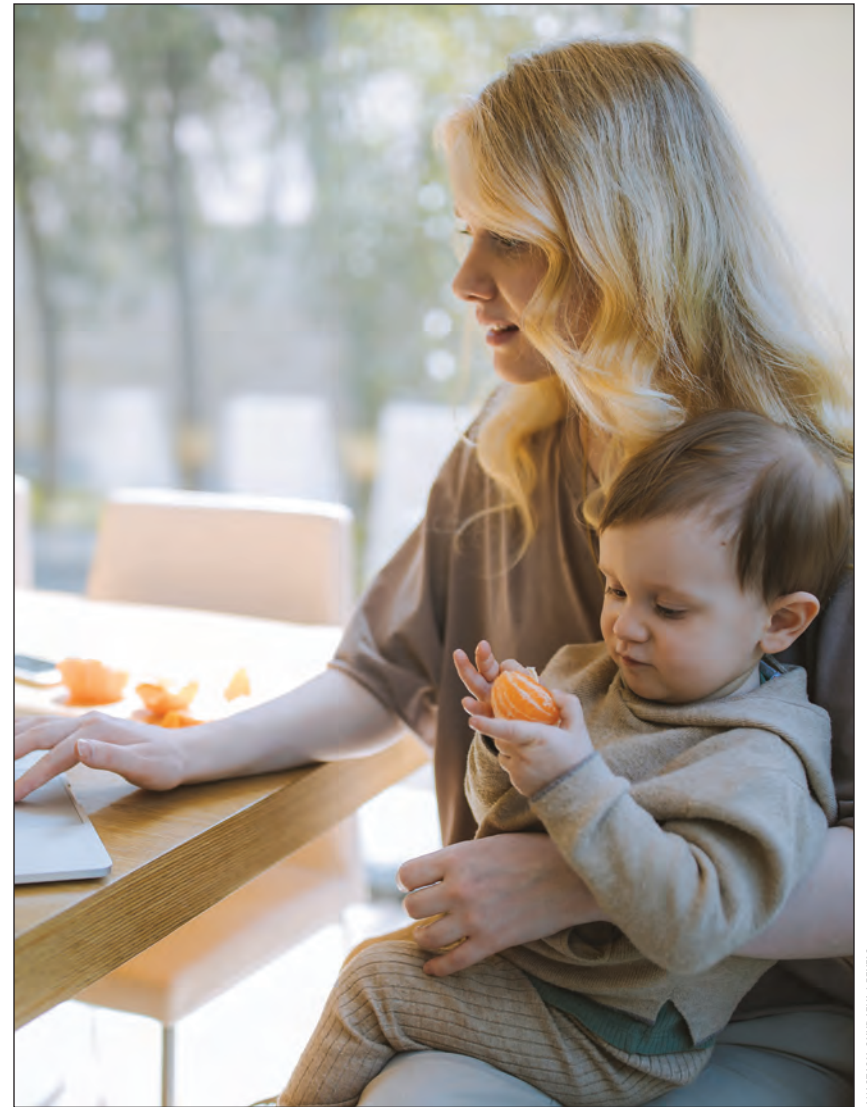
Rahl

Multiple research projects show that early learning and quality child care greatly impact ultimate life and social outcomes. We have not embraced public policies that could expand access to child care. The first five years of a child's life set the stage for later years in a much more profound way than college does. If more people understood thus, child care would be quickly folded into the public education system.

Many people, mostly women, are forced out of the workforce entirely to care for children. This hurts the economy in every possible way; lost talent, reduced productivity, a smaller tax base, fewer people earning incomes could be spent to support other businesses.

**Rahl:** The COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting women. Eight hundred thousand women have been removed from the workforce, while 220,000 men have been pulled out of the workforce. What do employers need to know about quality child care?

**Tobia:** Employers can play a role in both the public mindset and the political and policy realm. Businesses, both large and small, can advocate for increased government funding. They can also take the lead in pressuring the state and the federal government to overhaul the public education system to include early learning. Employers would be the biggest beneficiaries of this type of overhaul. The current workforce would be freed from worry about child care. They would also be priming the future workforce because if more young children had access to high-quality care, that would pay dividends years down the road. The public sector and private sector could also work together to help employers offer child care on-site. That would be a great win for both employees and employers.



ANASTASIA SHORAEVA / PEXELS

**Rahl:** It is important to remember that we have three audiences of people we are talking about when it comes to child care; consumers of child care, child care facilities that are themselves small businesses, and employers who need to know that their employees are mentally present, and able to perform at their high level. As a small business yourself, how have you been managing in 2020?

**Tobia:** The pandemic has made every problem worse for families, employers, and child care providers. It has kind of been a catch 22. Early on, when the schools were closed, we were encouraged to remain open. This put staff and family members at risk, yet we were not provided any subsidy or hazard pay. The state of Michigan did ease some of the regulations, but it was not nearly enough to sustain us during the pandemic. Many facilities including home-based providers have gone out of business or will go out of business because the revenue has dried up as parents either worked from home or lost their jobs. I expect it will be at least another year before the market will again support child care providers. This will impact employers as more employees will be forced to stay home due to the lack of available child care.

**Rahl:** What are some silver linings in all of this?

**Tobia:** Employers have seen during the pandemic that affording their employees some flexibility results in positive outcomes. When employers see employees as people first, and then these people happen to be parents, they can understand that flexibility and support are good for employers. We need to continue to apply these flexible standards to accommodate their employees which may decrease the number of people who must leave the workforce because there may be more opportunities. ■

# Arts Council of Greater Lansing Announces \$25,700 in Grants

LANSING AREA ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE 2021 FUNDING FOR PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The Arts Council of Greater Lansing proudly announces grant funding totaling \$25,700 to be distributed to area artists and arts and culture organizations. Funding support is provided through the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) Minigrant Program and the Arts Council’s Young Creatives and Artists in the Community.

“Our work as grant administrators for the region is an extremely important part of the work we do at the Arts Council and is a key component of our mission to support and strengthen the arts in Greater Lansing,” said Meghan Martin, executive director, Arts Council. “Distributing these grants, along with our own Arts Council grants during this historical time, is exciting. Our arts and culture sector is feeling unsure and hopeful, and they are looking for new ways to do their work. These funds will help a great deal. When our arts and culture sector is strong, so is Greater Lansing,” Martin said.

The MCACA Migrants assist grantees in covering costs for projects, supplies, conference, and workshop fees and other support for their work.

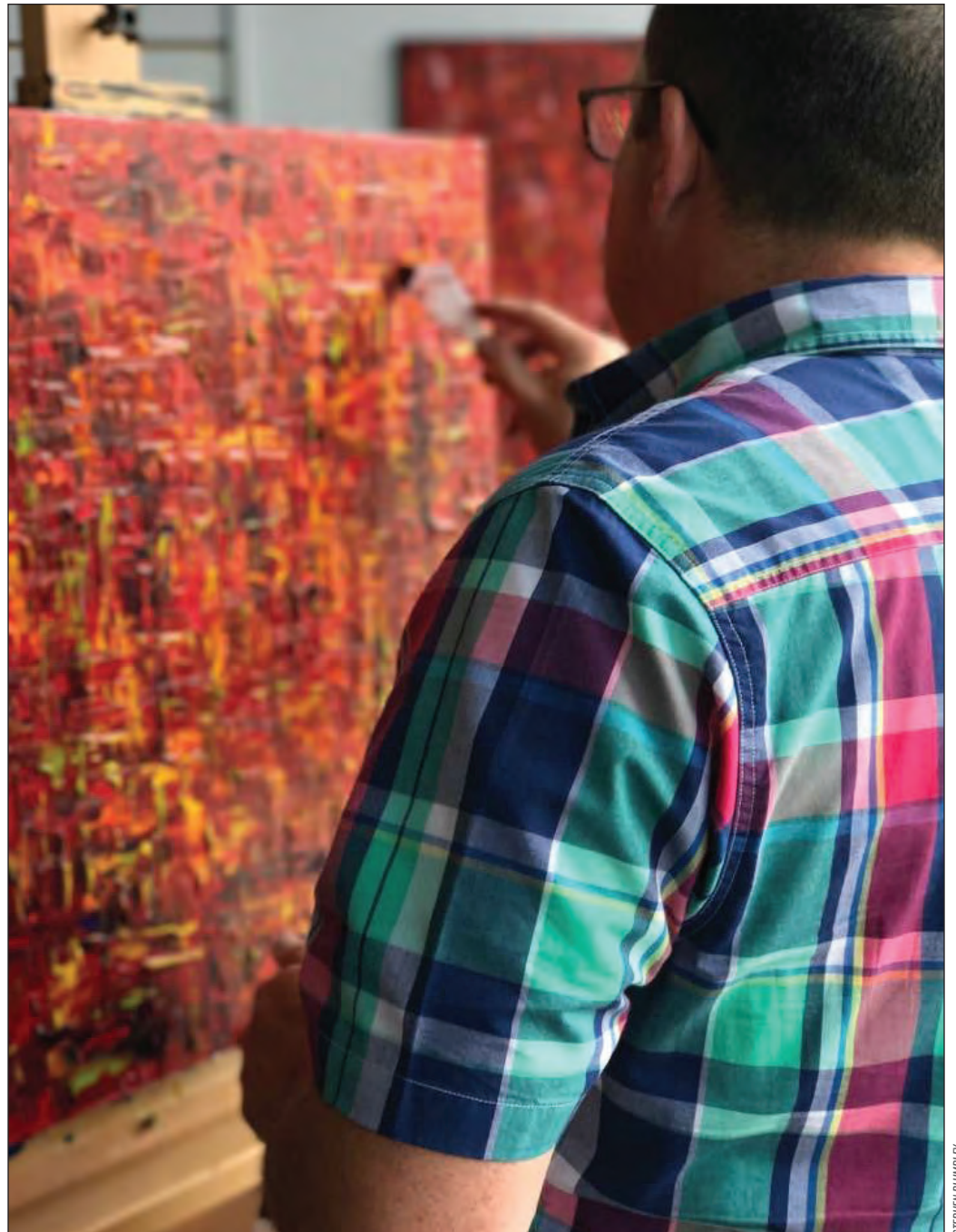
Grants were awarded through each of the following program initiatives:

**MCACA Professional or Organizational Development (POD) Minigrant** funding totaling \$3,000 for 2021 was awarded to the following recipients:

- Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center
- Michigan Library Association

**MCACA Arts Project Minigrants** funding totaling \$7,200 was awarded to the following recipients:

- Peckham Vocational Industries
- East Lansing Film Festival



STEPHEN PLUMBLEDY

**The Arts Council Young Creatives Grants** provide funding for area arts and culture organizations who provide youth arts programming to assist with program management and to offer scholarships to students with financial need.

- **Young Creatives Grant** funding totaling \$7,500 for 2021 was awarded to the following recipients: Lansing Art Gallery and Education Center, All-Of-Us-Express Children’s Theatre, Reach Studio Art Center and Lansing Symphony Orchestra.
- **The Arts Council Artists in the Community Grant Program** (formerly the Individual Artist Grant) supports community-driven placemaking projects that contribute to a “sense of place” for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- **Artists in the Community** funding totaling \$8,000 for 2021 was awarded to the following recipients: Emily Sutton Smith, Masaki Takahashi, Allison Spooner, and CeCi Bordayo. ■

## New Hires



Johnson

**Sparrow** is pleased to announce that **Helen Johnson, FACHE**, has been named president of Sparrow Eaton Hospital, effective Jan. 1, 2021. Helen comes to Sparrow from Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital, where she has spent the past 15 years as a key member of the regional hospital's executive team, serving as chief nursing officer, chief operating officer, and twice as interim president.

On Nov. 10, **Courtney Nicholls** joined the **Delta Township** team as their new finance director. An Allen Park native, Courtney, most recently was the manager for the city of Dexter. She has a Master of Public Administration degree from Wayne State University and is passionate about government finance. With her background and experience Courtney is an excellent addition to the community.



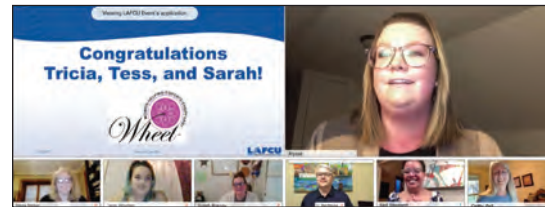
Meyerhuber

**Fraser Trebilcock** is pleased to announce the hiring of attorney **Matthew J. Meyerhuber** who will work primarily in the firm's Lansing office. Matt is a welcome addition to the firm's litigation department. Before graduating from the University of Michigan Law School in 2020, Matt externed at the Michigan Department of Attorney General, where he assisted the Flint Water Crisis prosecution team.

**Martin Commercial Properties** welcomes CPA **Susan Simpson** as the company's new chief financial officer. Simpson joined the executive leadership team in mid-November. She will oversee Martin and its affiliates' finances and financial strategy and will lead core administrative

functions related to human resources, information technology and insurance.

## Awards



LAFCU's Alyssa Troub, top right, congratulates W.H.E.E.L. Essay Contest winners, bottom row from left, Tricia Miller, Tess Poynter, and Sarah Rigney at a virtual scholarship presentation. Also pictured are LAFCU's Patrick Spyke and Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, and Lansing Community College Foundation's Cathy Zell.

LAFCU has awarded college scholarships to three women who are pursuing the education needed for careers that have been postponed by life circumstances. **Tricia Miller**, of Lansing; **Tess Poynter**, of Williamston; and **Sarah Rigney**, of Mason, each received a \$1,000 scholarship to Lansing Community College (LCC) through the Michigan credit union's Women Helping Educate Every Lady, or W.H.E.E.L., Essay Contest. Tricia Miller is returning to LCC to complete the nursing degree she started 21 years ago. Tess Poynter is entering college for the first time, four years after attending high school. Sarah Rigney also realized nursing was her calling after providing end-of-life care for a relative. She has not been in a classroom since 2007 when she completed a bachelor's degree in psychology at Central Michigan University.



Lyon

**Ngage Management**, a full-service association and event management company, is pleased to announce **Tobi Lyon**, CEO and founder, was named Entrepreneur of the Year at the 2020 Greater Lansing Entrepreneurial Awards. Tobi brings a lifelong passion for

the power of community, entrepreneurship, and more than 22 years of experience in all aspects of association management, philanthropy, and marketing. Tobi is a sought-after strategic planner and is widely recognized for her expertise in developing innovative leadership models, organizational growth strategies and coalition building to advance association missions.

The stars who make our region shine were on full display Saturday, Nov. 14, during the 2020 Greater Lansing Entrepreneurial Awards, presented by **517 Magazine**. This year's award winners were: **2020 Entrepreneur of the Year: Tobi Lyon**, Ngage Management. **Pivot Award: The Tri-County Office on Aging**. **Greater Lansing Business of the Year: GÜD Marketing**. **Leadership Award: Amanda Hayhoe-Kruger**, Hayhoe Asphalt. **Socially Responsible Entrepreneur: Glenn Granger**, Granger Construction. **Impact Award: Lisa Young**, Express Employment Professionals. **Entrepreneurial Spirit Award: Jerry Norris**, The Fledge. **Innovative Company Award: Creative Wellness**.



**Seth Murphy**, the intake consultant at the **Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**, was honored in October as the "Intake Consultant of the Year" at the SBDC's annual network meeting. The SBDC has a dozen offices across Michigan, including one located within LCC's Community Education and Workforce Development Division that provides consulting, training, and research to assist small businesses.



## Thank You, Mid-Michigan.

We all know what a year it's been, but through it all, we've persevered. At NAI Mid-Michigan, we've seen just how strong this community can be and we are so proud to be a part of it.

So thank you, again.

Here's to 2021.



**Foster Swift Collins & Smith, P.C.** has been recognized by the President and the U.S. Department of Commerce for their innovative ideas and expertise in the world of global exports. Foster Swift was honored with the President's "E" Award for Export Service; the highest honors U.S. entities can receive for making significant contributions to the expansion of U.S. exports. U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross praised the firm's work with Federal, State, and local strategic partners to identify low-cost and no-cost services to further clients' export growth.

The United States Department of Labor has recognized **Peckham, Inc.** with the Gold Hire Vets Medallion Award. The award recognizes employers who demonstrate exemplary efforts to recruit, employ, and retain veterans. It is the only veteran employment award at the federal level.

**LCC's RISE** Institute recently received the prestigious Equity in Education Award from the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (MACRAO) during its 2020 Annual Conference. Awarded annually, the Equity in Education Award is presented in recognition of people or programs that advance higher education in the state of Michigan. MACRAO seeks to showcase innovative and cutting-edge programs

that are improving institutions and experiences for students.

**Distinctions**



Lyons

Five budding entrepreneurs pitched at the **Lansing Economic Area Partnership's (LEAP)** Nov. 12 virtual Hatching event, finishing out the 2020 series of business pitch events strong. The top prize went to **Day'Shawn Lyons'** Drone Zone Air (DZA), a drone rental company specializing in creating fun flight experiences for special events, such as birthday parties or corporate events.

**MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU)** celebrated a milestone Oct. 21, welcoming **Steven Harmon** as its 300,000th member. Harmon opened his account through the Credit Union's eServices department. He received \$500 and a basket filled with MSUFCU-branded gifts.



Burch

Second-year students in the Business & Risk Management program at the **Wilson Talent Center (WTC)** are attempting to earn their Certified Insurance Service Representative (CISR) designation by completing five classes and taking five exams.

The first of those exams, was in Personal Auto Insurance, which allots one hour and thirty minutes to complete. **Becca Burch**, a senior from Mason High School, completed and passed the exam in thirty minutes, making her the first high school student in the nation to pass the exam on her first attempt according to the National Alliance for Insurance Education & Research, who administers the exam.



Sing

The Association of Fundraising Professionals' (AFP) Metro Detroit chapter has recognized **Rehmann's Chris Sing** as a distinguished volunteer for Detroit Public Television. AFP is a membership resource utilized by fundraising and nonprofit professionals throughout southeastern Michigan. Sing joined the Detroit Public Television Board of Trustees in 2014 and has served as Treasurer of the Board and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee since 2018. During her six years on the board, Sing has led the development of multiple strategic plans and played a vital role in its COVID-19 planning and response.

**People News**

On November 16, 2020, the **Delta Township**

**Board** recognized and celebrated the three terms of service by **Howard A. Pizzo** as Township Treasurer. The meeting was Howard's last meeting after 12 years as treasurer. During his time at the Township, Treasurer Pizzo helped to create the Township's first ethics policy, a comprehensive strategic plan, the improvement, and expansion of the parks and trail ways system, a robust general fund keeping Delta financially secure and has been an ambassador for being an age-friendly community. Howard's influence and contributions will be felt by residents and businesses alike for years to come.



KJ

**KJ** is in his seventh year with **Cottage Gardens!** Starting at the age of 14 to save up for a car he began his employment doing grounds work and maintenance. He quickly became extremely knowledgeable of plant stock and has continued growing in his knowledge and education becoming a crucial part of their sales staff. KJ has never called in sick in the entirety of employment. KJ is reliable, dependable and has been crucial to the growth of Cottage Gardens and providing their guests with the service they come for and upholding their motto of "a tradition of quality since 1923."

**Promotions**



Kole



Piper

**First National Bank of Michigan**, a community bank with branches in West and Mid-Michigan, recently

announced the promotion of two key members of the Bank's executive team. **Cindy Kole** was promoted to executive vice president, following her accomplishments as senior vice president, chief operating officer at First National Bank of Michigan. With over 30 years in the banking industry, **Steve Piper** has been promoted to executive vice president, following his leadership and contributions as senior vice president, chief credit officer since 2016.



Tribell

**LAFCU** has created the position of risk analyst to augment the credit union's risk management. **Brian Tribell**, with 12 years of experience in the financial sector, has been promoted to this new position. He will analyze data using fraud detection software to reduce LAFCU's financial risk, support the annual, independent

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audit in compliance with the U.S. Bank Secrecy Act, and provide risk assessment overviews to management and the LAFCU board.

### Company News



LCC celebrated Transgender Awareness Week Nov. 13-19 to help raise the visibility of transgender and gender-nonconforming people and address the issues this community faces. Activities for the week included Trans Trivia, viewing of the movie *Transformer* by Michael Del Monte followed by discussion, and Hot Topics in the Transosphere, an engaging, community-wide discussion on various issues related to the Trans community like healthcare, civil rights, safety, economics and more.

**Martin Commercial Properties** will serve as the exclusive leasing agent for more than 25,000 square feet of first floor retail and restaurant space in the massive Red Cedar Development on Lansing's eastern edge. Martin Commercial will work alongside the public-private partnership involving Ferguson Development, Continental Real Estate, and a consortium of city, county, and state entities. Currently under construction and slated to roll out in phases starting in 2021, the \$275 million mixed-use development on 35 acres will bring retail, housing, restaurants, and two hotels to the Lansing area.

A warm welcome now greets all visitors as they enter the heart of downtown Williamston. The new building mural, titled *Welcome*, was funded by a \$10,000 grant from the **Lansing Economic Area Partnership's (LEAP)** Public Art for Communities (PAFC) grant program, with support from the **PNC Foundation**. *Welcome* is the latest piece of permanent public art funded by the PAFC program. The city of Williamston Art Committee chose Kelly Beacome to bring the west wall of 151 S. Putman St. to life.

Recognizing a need for individuals and businesses alike to stay up to date on the latest legal trends to consider in 2020 before going into 2021, **Foster Swift** created a "2020 Year in Review" resource webpage. The page identifies several key topics for individuals and businesses to consider going

forward into 2021. This page will be updated to include the latest articles, videos and other attorneys' resources provided by attorneys across the firm's practice groups. To learn more, be sure to periodically visit the page at [fosterswift.com/f-year-in-review-resource-page-2020.html](https://fosterswift.com/f-year-in-review-resource-page-2020.html).



**Sparrow Carson Hospital** now boasts new ultrasound equipment that allows higher quality images and streamlines the process so caregivers can interact more with patients and better understand their health needs. The equipment is in line with Sparrow's reputation of using technology and innovation to improve care for people in mid-Michigan. Higher quality imaging allows radiologists to provide greater detail in their reports to physicians who customize care plans for patients.

Cameron Ashley Building Products, Inc. (Cameron Ashley), a leading distributor of specialty building products, will open its newest distribution center at 3524 S. Canal St. in **Delta Township**. Cameron Ashley serves over 5,000 customers across 42 locations throughout the United States, and brings customer-focused, innovative services and products to the Lansing region's untapped market. Cameron Ashley currently employs nearly 550 staff companywide and intends to hire three to five full-time employees in the first year at the Delta Township operation. **LEAP** was instrumental in landing the building products company in Delta Township.

When many people face uncertain job futures during a difficult economic time, **Sparrow** has revised its hiring policy to allow the hiring of applicants who test positive for tobacco or nicotine as part of their pre-employment screening process if they attend a smoking cessation program. The change not only contributes to the health and well-being of our applicants but will also increase job opportunities to area residents and will aid Sparrow in hiring new caregivers who are crucial in their response to the pandemic.

At the Nov. 9 Board **Mason Public Schools (MPS)** Board of Education Meeting, the Board voted to upgrade the District's heating,

ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system and install an air cleaning method as an additional measure to keep students and staff safe from airborne pathogens and COVID-19. MPS will purchase the Dynamic Air Quality Solutions system, which according to the company, "captures the droplet nuclei that play a role in aerosol transmission of the COVID-19 virus while contributing to reduced maintenance and lower energy costs, compared to high-efficiency conventional filters." MPS will spend \$472,000 to upgrade the HVAC systems in each of the District's six school buildings using this new technology.

**Blue Owl Coffee Co.** joined the Lansing Board of Water and Light's Pennies for Power program to financially support local community members during the holiday season. Blue Owl donated 10% of all bean and merchandise sales to Pennies for Power through December. Each year, more than 4,000 BWL customers round up their utility bills or donate a one-time payment to help families in need pay their utility bills during tough financial times. The program raises nearly \$40,000 annually.

On Nov. 20, members of the newly elected **Delta Township Board** were sworn into office. Due to Covid-19 guidelines and with an abundance of caution, each board member was sworn in separately by Clerk Clark. The board members will serve a term of four years through Nov. 20. They are: Supervisor **Kenneth R. Fletcher**, Clerk **Mary R. Clark**, Treasurer **Dennis R. Fedewa**, Trustee **Elizabeth (Beth) S. Bowen**, Trustee **Fonda J. Brewer**, Trustee **Andrea M. Cacasrilla**, and Trustee **Karen J. Mojica**.

As **Sparrow** achieves another COVID-19 testing milestone, performing its 300,000th test experts are urging mid-Michigan residents to choose the PCR nasopharyngeal swab because it is the most sensitive and accurate barometer of whether you have the virus. They are also expanding their testing capability to meet recent increases in demand and work toward a 1-2-day turnaround on results, far faster than most labs across the country. Sparrow continues to perform only the gold standard PCR nasopharyngeal swab test because less sensitive processes, such as the rapid antigen test, may have a greater false negative reading and are approved by the FDA only for symptomatic people within their first 5-12 days of symptoms.

In its 11th year, the billboard program was made possible through a successful collaboration with local business, Adams Outdoor Advertising, and multiple partnerships with **Arts Council** member artists from across the tri-county region. Together, they have provided a collective body of diverse public art to the region's

residents and visitors while also marketing the artists' individual entrepreneurial pursuits. The 2020/2021 billboards will feature each artist's work individually for two months on multiple boards throughout Greater Lansing and beyond in conjunction with a two-week splash of all six artist billboards that will begin in the new year.

As unemployment numbers in Michigan are *predicted to spike again*, **Capital Area Manufacturing Council**, **Capital Area Michigan Works!**, **GST Michigan Works!**, **Michigan Works! Southeast** and **Lansing Community College** hosted a virtual manufacturing job fair on Tuesday, Dec. 8. The Manufacturing Virtual Job Fair was broken into two different sessions featuring more than 40 different manufacturing employers ranging from *Alro Steel* to *Emergent BioSolutions* and *WestRock* to *PepsiCo*.

Mason's **Modern Woodmen of America** office partnered with Tinkr Labs, in the Meridian Mall, to raise funds and produce Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for local hospitals and first responders in the Mason and Lansing area. What made this fraternal event unique was the outpouring of local volunteers. More than 100 private citizens volunteered their 3D printers to produce more than 10,000 face shields and 5,000 protective masks.

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**Dawn Clark** of Modern Woodmen and **Melissa Rabideau** of Tinkr Labs were instrumental in producing and distributing the PPE.

As **Sparrow Eaton Hospital** approached a milestone of performing 10,000 COVID-19 tests, and expects increased demand in December, the hospital relocated its testing to AL!VE to improve access to the community and accommodate traffic and winter weather. Mid-Michigan residents can use a drive-thru lane at AL!VE, 800 W. Lawrence Ave., Charlotte, to receive the PCR nasopharyngeal swab, the most accurate and dependable COVID-19 test. The site, accessible through the east drive of AL!VE, will be open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The **Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)** and its partners at the **Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)** and Michigan Capital Region **Small Business Development Center (MI-SBDC)** are proud to announce a strong summer for Lansing region BAF recipients. The BAF program is administered by the MI-SBDC in partnership with MEDC and is traditionally available to participating business accelerators, such as LEAP, in Michigan's statewide SmartZone network to help high-tech companies purchase specialized services that are not otherwise available to them through accelerators. In 2020, BAF companies reported adding 12 new full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs with an average salary of more than \$43,000. The companies were awarded \$782,000 in federal research funds, more than \$7 million in follow-on investment, \$2 million in new sales, eight patents and six newly commercialized products.

As part of the reorganization of Minor League Baseball entering the 2021 season, the **Lansing Lugnuts** announced that they have received an invitation to partner as the new High A Midwest League affiliate of the 2020 American League West champion, Oakland Athletics.

**Burcham Hills** shared the joy of the holidays in a safe and engaging way by presenting its first drive-thru Burcham Hills Festival of Lights, on Dec. 21 and 22. The event featured 13,500 twinkling lights, live holiday music, Santa and contactless delivery of free hot chocolate, and candy canes.



LAFCU partnered with Grand Ledge Area District Library to present the LAFCU Listen & Learn Christmas Special, Tuesday, Dec. 15. It was available free via Webex, an internet videoconferencing application. Viewers were able to experience Santa reading a story, and there were

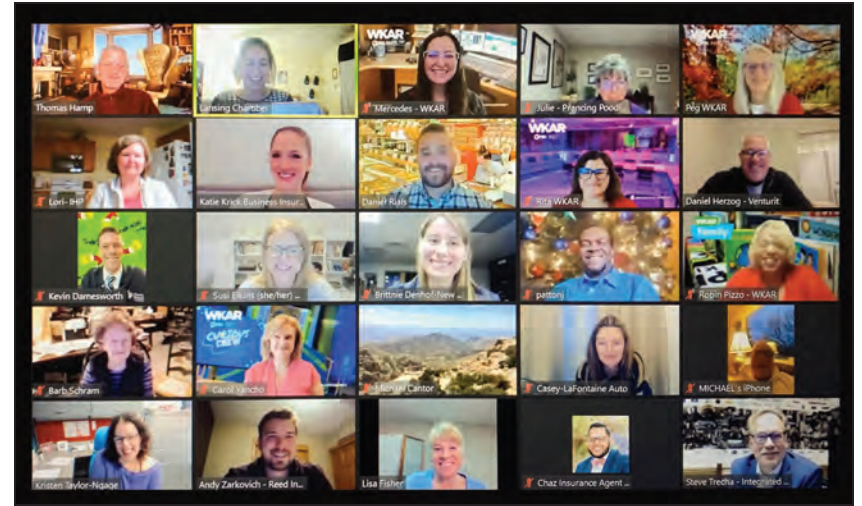
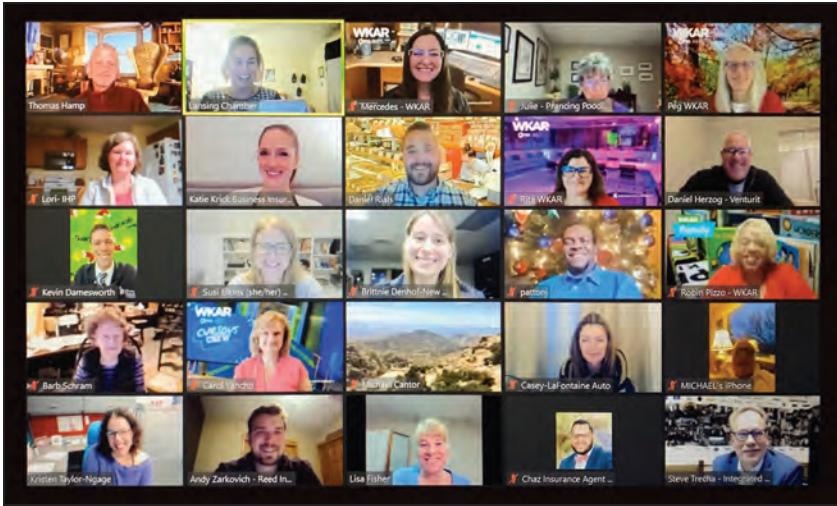
fun facts about reindeer from Rooftop Landing Reindeer Farm, Clare. Musical performances were presented by DeWitt Community Singers and Zachary Clark, a Lansing-area gospel singer and LAFCU help desk computer technician.

**Sparrow** Virtual Health services have provided unprecedented access to patients during the pandemic and is now expanding services to students at Olivet College. Under a special promotional arrangement, Olivet will promote the MySparrow portal to students, faculty, and staff to provide health and wellness care. Through the MySparrow portal patients can access an on-demand video visit with an urgent care provider from their smartphone, tablet or computer with a microphone and camera between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week. In addition to communicating with a Sparrow provider, the portal now provides a symptom checker to determine if COVID testing is needed and to access test results. The portal is unique in the mid-Michigan market.

Slated to open in early February of 2021, the **Courtyard by Marriott Lansing Downtown** is ideally located within walking distance to the State Capitol, Cooley Law School Stadium, the Lansing Center, and downtown businesses. The hotel's completion is the last piece of the BLOCK600 project that also features the Capital City Market and residential lofts. The Courtyard by Marriott Lansing Downtown can accommodate meetings in their 1,689 sq. ft. function space and also offer discounted room rates for your group or corporate travelers. Please reach out to the hotel directly if you are looking for clean and comfortable accommodations in the coming year: (517) 367-6677 ■



**If your organization has news to share, whether it's a recent promotion, award, distinction or new hire, please send your news releases or a short paragraph highlighting the good news to Ashley Sandborn, director of marketing and communications, LRCC, at [asandborn@lansingchamber.org](mailto:asandborn@lansingchamber.org).**



**December Member Mixer:** A big thanks to the greater Lansing business community for joining the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) at our Holiday Member Mixer, held December 8 via Zoom. We greatly appreciate the generous event sponsorship of WKAR and their support of the downtown Lansing staple, The Peanut Shop. We are proud to provide these venues for businesses to establish and grow relationships, stay plugged into the happenings of the region, and build brand awareness for their business. Stay tuned for more information on the 2021 series!

**LRCC Ambassador Holiday Celebration:** It was a holly jolly evening of celebration on Dec. 3 as the LRCC Ambassador Committee gathered via Zoom to toast the end of the year. Many laughs and smiles were shared amongst the group, with several donning festive apparel and sharing stories of turbulence and triumph this year. The LRCC Ambassador Committee fills several critical outreach and engagement roles for our membership. Even during this challenging year, they are committed to helping local businesses connect, grow, and thrive.

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# Consumers Energy Gift Card Promotion Supports Small Business

To assist in this challenging time, Consumers Energy helped community members stretch their dollars while also supporting small businesses and their employees in Michigan. During the key holiday shopping season, Consumers provided a dollar-for-dollar match for gift cards/certificates purchased through local chambers of commerce and downtown organizations. The “Our Town” gift card promotion doubled the amount shoppers could spend in downtowns across 56 communities.

“Small businesses are the backbone of the communities we serve, and every community has seen those businesses feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Lauren Youngdahl Snyder, vice president of customer experience, Consumers Energy. “With Our Town, we want to end the year by spreading cheer. We are putting dollars directly into shoppers’ hands to help them stretch their budgets and give a boost to shops and restaurants in their hometowns.”



**Consumers Energy**

*Count on Us*®

Consumers Energy provided \$3,000 to \$40,000 to local organizations (a total of \$850,000) in the Lower Peninsula, where Consumers offers electric and natural gas service. Shoppers earned the matching dollars when they buy gift cards directly from their local chambers and downtown organizations.

Participating chambers/business groups offering in the Greater Lansing region included:

- Downtown Lansing
- Charlotte Chamber of Commerce
- Grand Ledge Chamber
- Mason Downtown Development Authority
- Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown St. Johns, Michigan ■

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